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Paul's Declaration of Freedom from a Freed Slave's Perspective

By

Robin G. Thompson



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Abbreviations

Series, Journals, and Reference Works

AB	Anchor Bible
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
AncSoc	<i>Ancient Society</i>
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
AThR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BAFCS	Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting
BDAG	Bauer, Walter. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Revised and edited by Frederick W. Danker. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BDF	Blass, F., and A. Debrunner. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Translated by Robert W. Funk. Rev ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BGL	Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BMCRev	<i>Bryn Mawr Classical Review</i>
BMI	The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CÉFR	Collection de l'École française de Rome
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
CLAnt	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
ClQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CurBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
EcHR	<i>Economic History Review</i>
EJPT	<i>European Journal of Political Theory</i>
EMC	<i>Echos du monde classique: Classical Views</i>
ERH	<i>European Review of History</i>

<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
FaS	Forschungen zur antiken Sklaverei
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>FGrHist</i>	<i>Fragments der griechischen Historiker</i>
<i>GR</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
GTA	Göttinger theologische Arbeiten
<i>HBTh</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>Hesperia</i>	<i>Hesperia: Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens</i>
<i>Historia</i>	<i>Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
HThKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
<i>IJ</i>	<i>Irish Jurist</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
ISLL	Illinois Studies in Language and Literature
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JJP</i>	<i>Journal of Juristic Papyrology</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JGS</i>	<i>Journal of Global Slavery</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JStOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>Klio</i>	<i>Klio: Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHR	<i>Legal History Review</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, and H. S. Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed., with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
MAAR	<i>Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
NCamBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary

<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	New International Version Application Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTL	New Testament Library
NTR	New Testament Readings
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs
ORCS	Oxford Readings in Classical Studies
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
PCNT	Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament
<i>PCPhS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
PCS	Pentecostal Commentary Series
<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Phoenix: Bulletin uitgegeven door het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap</i>
<i>PT</i>	<i>Political Theory</i>
<i>R&T</i>	<i>Religion and Theology</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
<i>RIDA</i>	<i>Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité</i>
RRBS	Recent Research in Biblical Studies
RSECW	Routledge Studies in the Early Christian World
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>
<i>Scriptura</i>	<i>Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion, and Theology in Southern Africa</i>
SDSS	Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TAPS	Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
TF	Texte zur Forschung
<i>TLG</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i>

<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TSAJ</i>	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WSC</i>	Wisconsin Studies in Classics
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZECNT</i>	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series on the New Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZSS</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte</i>

Ancient Works

Aeschines (Aeschin.)

Ctes. *In Ctesiphonem*

Aeschylus (Aesch.)

Ag. *Agamemnon*

Cho. *Choephoroi*

Eum. *Eumenides*

Pers. *Persae*

Prom. *Prometheus vincitus*

Sept. *Septem contra Thebas*

Suppl. *Supplices*

Apuleius (Apul.)

Metam. *Metamorphoses*

Aristophanes (Ar.)

Plut. *Plutus*

Aristotle (Arist.)

Eth. Eud. *Ethica Eudemia*

Eth. Nic. *Ethica Nichomachea*

Metaph. *Metaphysica*

[*Oec.*] *Oeconomica*

Pol. *Politica*

Rhet. *Rhetorica*

Callimachus (Callim.)

Epigr. *Epigrammata*

Cicero (Cic.)

Amic. *De amicitia*

- Att.* *Epistulae ad Atticum*
Cael. *Pro Caelio*
Cat. *In Catalinam*
De or. *De oratore*
Fam. *Epistulae ad familiares*
Mil. *Pro Milone*
Tusc. *Tusculanae disputationes*
- Columella
- Arb.* *De arboribus*
- Demosthenes (Dem.)
- Aphob.* 1–3 *In Aphobum*
Chers. *De Chersoneso*
[Neaer.] *In Neaeram*
[Olymp.] *In Olympiodorum*
1 Steph. 1 *In Stephanum*
[2 Steph.] 2 *In Stephanum*
[Theocr.] *In Theocrinem*
Timocr. *In Timocratem*
- Dio Chrysostom (Dio Chrys.)
- 4 Regn.* *De regno iv (Or. 4)*
Serv. *De servis (Or. 10)*
Tyr. *De tyrannide (Or. 6)*
Ven. *Venator (Or. 7)*
- Diodorus Siculus (Diod. Sic.)
- Bib. Hist.* *Bibliotheca Historica*
- Diogenes Laertius (Diog. Laert.)
- Dionysius Halicarnassensis (Dion. Hal.)
- Ant. Rom.* *Antiquitates Romanae*
Is. *De Isaeo*
- Epictetus (Epict.)
- Diatr.* *Diatribai (Dissertationes)*
- Euripides (Eur.)
- Alc.* *Alcestis*
Andr. *Andromache*
Bacch. *Bacchae*
Cycl. *Cyclops*
Hec. *Hecuba*
Hel. *Helena*
Heracl. *Heraclidae*

<i>HF</i>	<i>Hercules furens</i>
<i>Hipp.</i>	<i>Hippolytus</i>
<i>IA</i>	<i>Iphigenia Aulidensis</i>
<i>Orest.</i>	<i>Orestes</i>
<i>Phoen.</i>	<i>Phoenissae</i>
<i>Rhes.</i>	<i>Rhesus</i>
<i>Tro.</i>	<i>Troades</i>
Harpocraton (Harp.)	
Herodotus	
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historiae</i>
Homer (Hom.)	
<i>Il.</i>	<i>Ilias</i>
<i>Od.</i>	<i>Odyssea</i>
Horace (Hor.)	
<i>Carm.</i>	<i>Carmina</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Epod.</i>	<i>Epodi</i>
<i>Saec.</i>	<i>Carmen saeculare</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Satirae</i>
Hyperides (Hyp.)	
<i>Athen.</i>	<i>In Athenogenem</i>
Ignatius (Ign.)	
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>To Polycarp</i>
Josephus (Joseph.)	
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antiquitates Iudaicae</i>
Juvenal (Juv.)	
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Satirae</i>
Lysias (Lys.)	
Macrobius (Macrob.)	
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Saturnalia</i>
Martial (Mart.)	
<i>Epigr.</i>	<i>Epigrammata</i>
Mishnah	
<i>m. 'Avot</i>	<i>Mishnah Avot</i>
<i>m. 'Ed.</i>	<i>Mishnah Eduyyot</i>
<i>m. Giṭ.</i>	<i>Mishnah Gittin</i>
Ovid (Ov.)	
<i>Am.</i>	<i>Amores</i>
<i>Ars</i>	<i>Ars amatoria</i>
<i>Fast.</i>	<i>Fasti</i>

<i>Her.</i>	<i>Heroides</i>
<i>Metam.</i>	<i>Metamorphoses</i>
<i>Rem. am.</i>	<i>Remedia amoris</i>
<i>Trist.</i>	<i>Tristia</i>
Persius (Pers.)	
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Satirae</i>
Petronius (Petron.)	
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Satyrica</i>
Philo	
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>De agricultura</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>De cherubim</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>De confusione linguarum</i>
<i>Contempl.</i>	<i>De vita contemplativa</i>
<i>Det.</i>	<i>Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat</i>
<i>Deus</i>	<i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	<i>De ebrietate</i>
<i>Exsechr.</i>	<i>De exsecrationibus</i>
<i>Flacc.</i>	<i>In Flaccum</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga et inventione</i>
<i>Her.</i>	<i>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit</i>
<i>Hypoth.</i>	<i>Hypothetica</i>
<i>Ios.</i>	<i>De Iosepho</i>
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>De vita Mosis</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	<i>De opificio mundi</i>
<i>Post.</i>	<i>De posteritate Caini</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	<i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>
<i>Prov.</i>	<i>De providentia</i>
<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini</i>
<i>Somn.</i>	<i>De somniis</i>
<i>Spec.</i>	<i>De specialibus legibus</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	<i>De virtutibus</i>
Philostratus (Philostr.)	
<i>Vit. Apoll.</i>	<i>Vita Apollonii</i>
Pindar (Pind.)	
<i>Isthm.</i>	<i>Isthmionikai</i>
<i>Pyth.</i>	<i>Pythionikai</i>
Plato (Pl.)	
<i>Gorg.</i>	<i>Gorgias</i>
<i>Lach.</i>	<i>Laches</i>

<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Leges</i>
<i>Menex.</i>	<i>Menexenus</i>
<i>Phaedr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politicus</i>
<i>Resp.</i>	<i>Respublica</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>

Plautus (Plaut.)

<i>Amph.</i>	<i>Amphitruo</i>
<i>Aul.</i>	<i>Aulularia</i>
<i>Capt.</i>	<i>Captivi</i>
<i>Cas.</i>	<i>Casina</i>
<i>Curc.</i>	<i>Curculio</i>
<i>Epid.</i>	<i>Epidicus</i>
<i>Men.</i>	<i>Menaechmi</i>
<i>Merc.</i>	<i>Mercator</i>
<i>Mil. glor.</i>	<i>Miles gloriosus</i>
<i>Most.</i>	<i>Mostellaria</i>
<i>Pers.</i>	<i>Persae</i>
<i>Poen.</i>	<i>Poenulus</i>
<i>Pseud.</i>	<i>Pseudolus</i>
<i>Rud.</i>	<i>Rudens</i>
<i>Trin.</i>	<i>Trinummus</i>
<i>Truc.</i>	<i>Truculentus</i>

Pliny the Elder

<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Naturalis historia</i>
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Pliny the Younger

<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Pan.</i>	<i>Panegyricus</i>

Plutarch (Plut.)

<i>Ages.</i>	<i>Agesilaus</i>
<i>Cons. ux.</i>	<i>Consolatio ad uxorem</i>
<i>Glor. Ath.</i>	<i>De gloria Atheniensium</i>

Pollux (Poll.)

<i>Onom.</i>	<i>Onomasticon</i>
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Quintilian (Quint.)

<i>[Dec. Min.]</i>	<i>Declamationes Minores</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutio oratoria</i>

Sallust (Sall.)

<i>Bell. Cat.</i>	<i>Bellum catalinae</i>
<i>Bell. Jug.</i>	<i>Bellum jugurthinum</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historiae</i>

Seneca the Elder (Sen.)

Controv. *Controversiae*

Seneca the Younger (Sen.)

Apoc. *Apocolocyntosis*

Ep. *Epistulae morales*

Ira *De ira*

Marc. *Ad Marciam de consolatione*

Nat. *Naturalis historia*

Vit. beat. *De vita beata*

Sophocles (Soph.)

Aj. *Ajax*

El. *Electra*

Oed. tyr. *Oedipus tyrannus*

Phil. *Philoctetes*

Trach. *Trachiniae*

Suetonius (Suet.)

Aug. *Divus Augustus*

Cal. *Gaius Caligula*

Claud. *Divus Claudius*

Gramm. *De grammaticis*

Poet. *De poetis*

Rhet. *De rhetoribus*

Tacitus (Tac.)

Agr. *Agricola*

Ann. *Annales*

Dial. *Dialogus de oratoribus*

Germ. *Germania*

Hist. *Historiae*

Terence (Ter.)

Ad. *Adelphi*

Andr. *Andria*

Eun. *Eunuchus*

Phorm. *Phormio*

Thucydides (Thuc.)

Virgil (Virg.)

Aen. *Aeneid*

Xenophon (Xen.)

Anab. *Anabasis*

Cyr. *Cyropaedia*

Hell. *Hellenica*

Hier. *Hiero*

<i>Lac.</i>	<i>Respublica Lacedaemoniorum</i>
<i>Mem.</i>	<i>Memorabilia</i>
<i>Oec.</i>	<i>Oeconomica</i>

Inscriptions and Papyri

<i>AD</i>	<i>Archaiologikon deltion</i>
<i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i>
<i>CIRB</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum regni Bosporani</i>
<i>CPL</i>	<i>Corpus poetarum latinorum</i>
<i>FD</i>	<i>Fouilles de Delphes</i>
<i>FIRA</i>	<i>Fontes Iuris Romani Anteiusiniani</i>
<i>I.Bouthrotos</i>	<i>Inscriptions de Bouthrôtos</i>
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
<i>MChrest</i>	<i>Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde</i>
<i>P. Hamb.</i>	<i>Griechische Papyrusurkunden der Hamburger Staats</i>
<i>P. Lips.</i>	<i>Griechische Urkunden der Papyrussammlung zu Leipzig</i>
<i>P. Oxy.</i>	<i>Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
<i>PSI</i>	<i>Papiri Greci e Latini, Pubblicazioni della Società italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplemental epigraphicum graecum</i>
<i>SGDI</i>	<i>Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften</i>
<i>TC</i>	<i>Tituli Calymnii</i>
<i>TH</i>	<i>Tabulae Herculaneenses</i>
<i>ιThesp</i>	<i>Les Inscriptions de Thespies</i>

Roman Law Codes

<i>Cod. Iust.</i>	<i>Codex Iustinianus</i>
<i>Dig.</i>	<i>Digesta</i>

Introduction

In his letter to the Galatian churches, Paul declares that “for freedom Christ set us free” (Gal 5:1).¹ He uses freedom terminology and concepts throughout this letter. In fact, Galatians has been called the “Magna Charta of Christian freedom.”² Paul’s interpreters have wrestled with the question of what this freedom entails. Is it a spiritual freedom only or something more? I suggest we could enhance our understanding of this freedom by exploring the social location and the lived experience of some of those to whom Paul was writing: those to whom freedom was most significant—the slaves and freedpersons in these Christian communities.³ How did those who were slaves, who longed for freedom, and those who were freedpersons, who achieved only a circumscribed freedom, hear and understand Paul’s declaration of freedom?

Some might question whether a freedperson’s view of freedom should inform our understanding of Paul’s letter to the Galatian churches. Such persons might argue that it is only Paul’s view of freedom that merits attention. It is clear, however, that Paul is writing to persuade his listeners, and there is evidence of slaves and freedpersons in the early church. For his argument to be effective, he would need to take into account their view of freedom. In addition, the discussion of freedom and exactly what it entailed was common during the early Roman empire. Two philosophers even had treatises dedicated to the subject.⁴ As a Jew, Paul would also have been aware of the fervor for political freedom mounting in Israel. Freedom was a live—and emotional—topic in Paul’s world, and he would have known that his usage of the terminology could invoke varied understandings of what freedom meant. Therefore, it is critical to not only explore how Paul would have understood the concept of freedom

1 Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

2 Samuel Vollenweider, *Freiheit als neue Schöpfung: Eine Untersuchung zur Eleutheria bei Paulus und in seiner Umwelt*, FRLANT 147 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 285.

3 Freedpersons are slaves who have been manumitted, or set free, by their owners. It is important to note that freed slaves never acquired the status and privileges of people who were born free. The early Christian assemblies included freeborn persons, slaves, and freedpersons. See Dale B. Martin, “Slave Families and Slaves in Families,” in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 207; Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 72–73.

4 Philo, *Every Good Person is Free*; Epictetus, *About Freedom* (Book IV, chapter 1).

but also to explore how some in the Galatian churches—those who most desperately sought after freedom—understood it.

It is important then to identify what a freedperson's view of freedom might be. As twenty-first-century readers, we need to be aware that we might hold a different understanding of freedom than someone living in the first century—especially a slave or freedperson. In addition, when freedpersons were manumitted by their owners, they did not experience freedom as we in the twenty-first century often understand it. So not only does freedom need to be explored in its first-century context, but the practice of Greek and Roman manumission needs to be examined also.⁵

In order to determine a freedperson's understanding of freedom, it is imperative to engage the work of classical scholars. During the last fifty years, these scholars have done ground-breaking research regarding ancient Greek and Roman manumission practices and the social location of slaves set free under these systems. A. M. Duff had previously published his *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire* in 1928.⁶ However, many have noted the bias and racism which informed this work and led to an incorrect understanding of Roman freedpersons. There was not another book-length treatment of the topic again until Susan Treggiari's *Roman Freedmen during the Late Republic* (1969).⁷ Treggiari wrote her work to explore the period left uncovered by Duff, as the title suggests, but she also addressed areas of religion and social life—topics that Duff did not examine.

Treggiari's solid research marked the beginning of a rise in interest in Greek and Roman manumission and the freedpersons created by these systems. Several significant works were written in the following years. Keith Hopkins included the chapter, "Between Slavery and Freedom: On Freeing Slaves at Delphi" in his 1978 *Conquerors and Slaves*.⁸ In this chapter, written along with P. J. Roscoe, Hopkins examined the Delphi manumission inscriptions, which record over twelve hundred manumissions. He was one of the first scholars to stress that while Greeks and Romans practiced manumission, most slaves were never freed. Orlando Patterson published his seminal *Slavery and Social*

5 It is important to understand that two different manumission systems were followed during the first century. One of the goals of this project is to explore both Greek and Roman manumission and clearly differentiate between the two.

6 A. M. Duff, *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1928; reprint, Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino, 2007).

7 Susan Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen during the Late Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969).

8 Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

Death: A Comparative Study in 1982.⁹ In three of his chapters Patterson evaluated manumission across slave cultures throughout history.¹⁰ He concluded that since slavery was social death, manumission was symbolic rebirth. He argued that slavery could not be understood apart from manumission. Keith Bradley contributed a chapter on manumission in his 1987 *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control*.¹¹ He observed that the slaves who were close to their masters, serving in the household, were the ones most likely to be offered manumission. He asserted that manumission functioned as an effective means of social control and of perpetuating the institution of slavery.

Recognizing that much work remains, classical scholars continue to research ancient manumission and freedpersons. Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz explores Greek manumission from the archaic period to the Roman imperial era in her *Not Wholly Free: The Concept of Manumission and the Status of Manumitted Slaves in the Ancient Greek World* (2005).¹² She emphasizes that Greek manumission provided neither citizenship to the manumitted slave nor social equality with those who were freeborn. She concludes that Greek manumission resulted in a freedom which was costly, gradual, partial, and sometimes even revocable. In *The Freedman in the Roman World* (2011), Henrik Mouritsen explores Roman manumission.¹³ He argues that because the “stain of slavery” was never erased, Roman society was anxious to create a social and legal construct—the freedman—so that such a person was never seen as an equal to a freeborn citizen. He examines how the relationship between the slave and master was redefined upon manumission, and he explores the benefits and disadvantages of the newly established patronage. Matthew Perry focuses on freedwomen in his *Gender, Manumission, and the Roman Freedwoman* (2014).¹⁴ He explores why women slaves were manumitted and why they were granted citizenship. He argues that citizenship was the central component of Roman

9 Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

10 Chapter 8: “Manumission: Its Meaning and Modes,” Chapter 9: “The Status of Freed Persons,” and Chapter 10: “Patterns of Manumission.”

11 Keith R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (Belgium: Editions Latomus, 1984; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

12 Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free: The Concept of Manumission and the Status of Manumitted Slaves in the Ancient Greek World* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

13 Henrik Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

14 Matthew J. Perry, *Gender, Manumission, and the Roman Freedwoman* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

manumission. However, for women, marriage was the critical element that moved a freedwoman to a position of honor.¹⁵

While the classical study of freedpersons has contributed significantly to our understanding of ancient slavery and manumission, few biblical scholars have engaged this work and explored how it might inform our understanding of Scripture. One exception is J. Albert Harrill in *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity* (1995).¹⁶ In this work, Harrill explores ancient slavery and manumission and examines two Christian texts which address manumission in the early churches: 1 Cor 7:21 and Ignatius, *Ad Polycarp*. 4.3. He concludes that neither passage supports the widely held view that early Christians were opposed to the manumission of slaves who were believers. Laura Nasrallah also explores slavery and manumission in her “You Were Bought with a Price’: Freedpersons and Things in 1 Corinthians” (2014).¹⁷ She discusses how Corinth was rebuilt and settled with a large contingency of freedmen, and therefore these people were surely represented in the Corinthian church. She argues that the language in 1 Cor 6:20, 7:22, and 7:23 would have brought to mind a very real-life experience for those listening, and they would have understood Paul’s words through that lens. These two works serve as evidence that on the rare occasion when biblical scholars do explore manumission and how it informs the biblical text, they do so primarily in regards to 1 Corinthians 7.

Paul, however, also uses the terminology of freedom and slavery throughout his letter to the Galatians. Several commentaries on Galatians reference

15 In addition to the book chapters and monographs mentioned, there have been numerous other books and articles which have contributed over the last fifty years to the subject of manumission and freedpersons. For example, Wolfgang Waldstein, *Operae libertorum: Untersuchungen zur Dienstpflicht freigelassener Sklaven*, FaS 19 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1986); Werner Eck and Johannes Heinrichs, *Sklaven und Freigelassene in der Gesellschaft der römischen Kaiserzeit*, TF 61 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993); E. Leigh Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosphorus Kingdom*, TSAJ 75 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999); Marc Kleijwegt, ed., *The Faces of Freedom: The Manumission and Emancipation of Slaves in Old World and New World Slavery* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Sinclair Bell and Teresa Ramsby, *Free at Last! The Impact of Freed Slaves on the Roman Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012); Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*; Rose MacLean, *Freed Slaves and Roman Imperial Culture: Social Integration and the Transformation of Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

16 J. Albert Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity*, HUT 32 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

17 Laura Salah Nasrallah, “You Were Bought with a Price’: Freedpersons and Things in 1 Corinthians,” in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Sarah A. James, and Daniel N. Schowalter, NovTSup, vol. 155 (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

freedom in their titles and examine the concept in this letter.¹⁸ However, they do not explore the relationship of freedpersons and freedom and how that relationship might impact our understanding of Galatians. Many monographs and articles explore Paul's concept or theology of freedom,¹⁹ but again there is little exploration of freedom through the lens of manumission. Other authors focus on the institution of slavery and Paul's response (or non-response) to it, but they do not explore at any length the relationship between slavery and manumission and how that might inform the conversation.²⁰ And finally, many authors explore Paul's use of the slavery metaphor in his letters.²¹ These

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- 18 C. K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985); F. F. Bruce, "Called to Freedom: A Study in Galatians," in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke*, ed. William C. Weinrich, vol. 1 (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1984); Robert G. Gromacki, *Stand Fast in Liberty: An Exposition of Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979); Leon Morris, *Galatians: Paul's Charter of Christian Freedom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996); Merrill C. Tenney, *Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty*, Rev. and enl. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978).
- 19 For example, Hans Dieter Betz, *Paul's Concept of Freedom in the Context of Hellenistic Discussions about the Possibilities of Human Freedom* (Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies, 1977); Wayne Coppins, *The Interpretation of Freedom in the Letters of Paul: With Special Reference to the 'German' Tradition*, WUNT 261 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); F. Stanley Jones, 'Freiheit' in den Briefen des Apostels Paulus: Eine historische, exegetische und religionsgeschichtliche Studie, GTA 34 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987); Thomas Söding, "Die Freiheit des Glaubens: Konkretionen der Soteriologie nach dem Galaterbrief," in *Frühjudentum und Neues Testament im Horizont Biblischer Theologie*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Johannes Weiss, *Die christliche Freiheit, nach der Verkündigung des apostels Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1902).
- 20 For example, John Byron, "Paul and the Background of Slavery: The *Status Quaestionis* in New Testament Scholarship," *CurBR* 3, no. 1 (2004); Paul R. Coleman-Norton, "The Apostle Paul and the Roman Law of Slavery," in *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of Allan Chester Johnson*, ed. Paul R. Coleman-Norton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951). The one exception is a short article by Francis Lyall arguing for Roman law being the background of Paul's references to both slavery and freedpersons. Francis Lyall, "Roman Law in the Writings of Paul: The Slave and the Freedman," *NTS* 17, no. 1 (1970): 77–79.
- 21 For example, John Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Traditio-Historical and Exegetical Examination*, WUNT 162 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); I. A. H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church: From the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century*, JSNTSup 156 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Murray J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ*, NSBT 8 (Nottingham: Apollos, 1999); Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); Sam Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons: A New Rhetoric Analysis on Paul's Slave Metaphors in His Letter to the Galatians*, StBibLit 81 (New York: Peter Lang, 2005). For a full review of the literature on Paul and the metaphor of slavery through the year 2008

studies all acknowledge the problem of understanding the metaphor in relation to the institution of slavery, and so they begin with an exploration of the institution. While these studies sometimes touch on manumission, it is not their focus. However, there were those in the first century who heard the letter of Galatians and for whom slavery and achieved freedom were no metaphor but a lived experience. What did freedom mean to these people, either slaves longing for manumission or freedpersons who had received it? Can this view of freedom inform our understanding of the freedom proclaimed in Gal 5:1?

To answer these questions, I will employ a social historical approach. This approach builds on the work of historical criticism which examines the literary, non-literary, and archaeological sources of a particular time period in order to understand the historical context in which a text was written. This historical context helps the modern reader avoid bringing a twenty-first-century concept or idea into an ancient setting. Historical criticism can often provide answers to questions like, “How were slaves manumitted by their owners?” But it usually does not attempt to answer questions like, “Why did owners manumit their slaves?”²² To explore questions of “why” instead of “how” often requires the discipline of social history.²³

I will use the social historical approach, in particular, rather than the social-scientific method.²⁴ The social historical approach allows us to collect and evaluate data regarding the social dimensions of life during a particular period of history. This approach is distinct from the social-scientific method in that it does not employ any models or theories from modern anthropology and sociology to evaluate this data. Kenneth Berding comments that the primary goal of scholars involved in social-scientific criticism is to “[determine] the way people ... interacted with one another and the impact of these

see John Byron, *Recent Research on Paul and Slavery*, RRBS 3 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 67–91.

22 John H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 12.

23 This approach is also called *social description* by some scholars. See *ibid.*, 13; Bruce J. Malina, “The Received View and What It Cannot Do: III John and Hospitality,” in *Slavery in Text and Interpretation*, ed. Allen Dwight Callahan, Richard A. Horsley, and Abraham Smith, Semeia, vol. 35 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1986), 177; Carolyn Osiek, “The New Handmaid: The Bible and the Social Sciences,” *TS* 50, no. 2 (1989): 269. Richter calls it *proto-sociological*. P. J. Richter, “Recent Sociological Approaches to the Study of the New Testament,” *Religion* 14, no. 1 (1984): 85.

24 For a concise explanation of the difference between these two approaches see Susan R. Garrett, “Sociology of Early Christianity,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

relational structures.”²⁵ I share this goal, such as determining how slave owners interacted with those slaves they chose to manumit and the continuing impact of the relational structure of former owner and manumitted slave. I propose, however, that this social relationship and structure can be discovered through the exploration of the primary source materials rather than the application of modern social-science theories or models.²⁶

The social historical approach is often criticized by the practitioners of the social-science methodology. A common criticism is that the approach is ill-defined and does not explore the significance of the social data.²⁷ Another criticism is that those who engage in social history often neglect defining key terms which might have a significantly different meaning in the first century from that in the twenty-first century.²⁸ A third criticism is that since social history lacks clearly defined models, the social location of the practitioner often goes unidentified and unquestioned, unknowingly informing the evaluation of the social data.²⁹

Addressing these concerns in reverse order, I identify my social location as a white female scholar of biblical studies, who is a moderate evangelical,³⁰ and who lives in the southern United States. My background, like that of everyone else, knowingly and unknowingly colors my perceptions and informs my presuppositions. I approach the biblical text with a hermeneutic of trust, rather than a hermeneutic of suspicion.³¹ I do so because I believe the biblical text

25 Kenneth Berding, “The Hermeneutical Framework of Social-Scientific Criticism: How Much Can Evangelicals Get Involved?” *EvQ* 75, no. 1 (2003): 5.

26 In fact, some argue that it may not be possible to discover this information using the social-scientific method. Harrill comments that those who practice the “social historical’ approach object that the source material is too sparse to support use of sociological models and that such models, as mental constructs, are too modern to present a plausible explanation of the ancient data.” Harrill, *Manumission in Early Christianity*, 5.

27 Richter, “Recent Sociological Approaches,” 78. See also Garrett, “Sociology of Early Christianity,” 90; Malina, “The Received View,” 177.

28 Malina, “The Received View,” 178.

29 Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings*, SNTSMS 60 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 26; Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), xv; Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 8.

30 Although I, along with a growing number of others, experience some angst in using the term “evangelical” in describing myself due to the politicization of the term.

31 I borrow this language from Lisa M. Bowens, *African American Readings of Paul: Reception, Resistance, and Transformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 29–98. Esau McCauley also uses this language and describes the task this way, “For those of us who want to continue to affirm the ongoing normative role of the Bible in the life of the church, it will not do to dismiss the concerns raised about the Bible from many quarters. The path forward

to be God's word. But while I apply a hermeneutic of trust to the biblical text, I believe it is important to apply a hermeneutic of suspicion to the different *applications* of the text that have been taught and accepted over the years.³² I do this not to cast dispersions on all previous interpretations, but in simple acknowledgement that all interpreters, myself included, are fallible.

Addressing the second criticism of neglecting to define key terms, I offer the following definitions. *Slavery* is "the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised"³³ which results in "the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons."³⁴ By using this extended definition, I am stressing that slavery is not only a matter of ownership and property but also a human relationship that entails complete domination.³⁵ In short, slaves are treated as things *and* persons and exploited along both lines. Both Greece and Rome are considered *slave societies*—societies "in which the

is not a return to the naiveté of a previous generation, but a journeying through the hard questions.... I propose instead that we adopt the posture of Jacob and refuse to let go of the text until it blesses us. Stated differently, we adopt a hermeneutic of trust in which we are patient with the text in the belief that when interpreted properly it will bring a blessing and not a curse." Esau McCauley, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 20–21. This approach is in juxtaposition to scholars who come to the biblical text with a hermeneutic of suspicion, as articulated by Kelly Brown Douglas, "Given the fact that various biblical texts do indeed lend themselves to oppressive interpretations, and thus can set in motion a biblical tradition of terror, we are compelled to adopt a certain 'hermeneutic of suspicion' in the way we use and interpret the Bible." Kelly Brown Douglas, "Marginalized People, Liberating Perspectives: A Womanist Approach to Biblical Interpretation," *AthR* 83, no. 1 (2001): 47.

32 Bowens notes that the African American interpreters she studied "applied a hermeneutic of suspicion to the white interpreters of the text, such as the slaveholders, proponents of slavery, and advocates of segregation, and not to the text itself. They did not allow the way Paul was preached or explained to them to make them suspicious of Paul, but rather, more often than not, such interpretations made them suspicious of the white interpreter." Bowens, *African American Readings of Paul*, 297.

33 Jean Allain, *The Slavery Conventions: The Travaux Préparatoires of the 1926 League of Nations Convention and the 1956 United Nations Convention* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 50.

34 Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 13. For a discussion concerning the challenge of defining slavery see Harrill, *Manumission in Early Christianity*, 13–17; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 16–27.

35 I base this extended definition on the work of David Lewis who astutely observes that "the property definition looks at slavery from the vantage point of the owner, Patterson's definition from the vantage point of the slave, focusing on the social consequences of the master's rights of ownership." David Lewis, "Orlando Patterson, Property and Ancient Slavery: The Definitional Problem Revisited," in *On Human Bondage: After Slavery and Social Death*, ed. J. Bodel and W. Scheidel (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, 2016), 45.

social structure was decisively dependent on the institution of slavery.”³⁶ I use Patterson’s definition because it is important to note that in a slave society, it is the social structure—not always the economy—which is dependent on slavery.³⁷ *Manumission* is the act of an owner setting a slave free; this should not be confused with emancipation. In the United States, emancipation was the freeing of all slaves, thus doing away with the institution of slavery itself. In ancient Rome, *emancipation* was the “release from parental power (*patria potestas*).”³⁸ Therefore in Rome, sons and daughters were emancipated, slaves were manumitted.³⁹ *Freedpersons* are male and female slaves who have been manumitted. They are no longer slaves, but they are never considered equal to freeborn persons. When freedpersons have children, however, those children are freeborn persons—the status of freedperson belongs only to the freed slave.⁴⁰ *Freedom* defies easy definition. I will explore the concept at length in chapter 3.

To address the first criticism of the social historical approach being an ill-defined method, I will strive to define my methodology carefully and clearly. I will not only examine the primary sources detailed below, but I will attempt to evaluate the significance of the relationship between the former slave owner and the manumitted slave and how this might inform a freedperson’s understanding of freedom. I acknowledge that this evaluation will not be a straightforward or simple process and the conclusions will be provisional. The bias of the primary sources must be taken into consideration, but even determining what that bias might be is not always easy or possible. I will be careful to note what I think the bias could be in a particular source and my reasons for that conclusion. Legal material is helpful in that it indicates the standards the ruling elite wanted to enforce, but it cannot tell us to what degree those

36 Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 353.

37 For recent explorations of the definition of a slave society see Catherine Hezser, “Greek and Roman Slaving in Comparative Ancient Perspective: The Level of Integration,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Slavery*, ed. Stephen Hodkinson, Marc Kleijwegt, and Kostas Vlassopoulos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); David Lewis, *Greek Slave Systems in Their Eastern Mediterranean Context, c.800–146 BC* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

38 Alan Watson, ed., *The Digest of Justinian*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), Glossary.

39 See also Harrill, *Manumission in Early Christianity*, 4.

40 Some scholars say that the term “freedman” is also used for a freed slave’s descendants. While the sons of freed slaves were called freedmen before 217 BCE, the term after that time referred only to the freed slave. See Evan W. Haley, “Suetonius ‘Claudius’ 24,1 and the Sons of Freedmen,” *Historia* 35, no. 1 (1986): 120–21; Duff, *Freedmen*, 50–51.

standards were followed.⁴¹ It is also important to note that determining Greek law is more challenging than determining Roman law. Since each city-state wrote its own laws, there is no single, authoritative Greek law code that can be consulted. Another challenge is that inscriptions may tell us the perspective of the freedperson, but we cannot assume that. Even when I have brought all these sources together, it is important to acknowledge that we have piecemeal evidence, glimpses at best into the past. It is tempting to fill in the gaps, to complete the picture. While I may make some conjectures in order to draw some conclusions, I will be careful to note what is based on evidence versus what is based on inference. By following this approach, I hope to validate Susan Garrett's assertion that while "exegetes and historians must make intentional and well-documented decisions about their methodological perspectives ... such explicitness does not necessitate that one adopt a model-testing approach."⁴²

My specific approach is as follows. In chapter 2, I establish what led an owner to manumit a slave, how such a manumission took place and at what cost, the extent of freedom that a manumitted slave might experience, and the benefits of manumission for a slave.⁴³ I determine this information first for Greek manumission, then for Roman. I explore the evidence that Greek manumission continued to take place during the Roman Empire and determine the geographical areas where Roman manumission took place. In order to determine this information, I examine legal, literary, and inscriptional sources from the fifth century BCE through the first century CE. The literary sources are from multiple genres: poets, playwrights, historians, philosophers, and law codes.⁴⁴ The inscriptional sources are manumission inscriptions as well as a

41 Hezser comments that only when "legal texts are examined in connection with other, non-legal texts on the same issue, can persuasive conclusions be reached." Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 21.

42 Garrett, "Sociology of Early Christianity," 92.

43 It may seem obvious that the benefit of manumission for a slave is release from slavery. Slaves, however, usually had to pay a high price for their freedom, including leaving children in slavery or providing more children as slaves. In return, they often received a circumscribed freedom. Therefore, it is important to explore the benefits of manumission to a slave.

44 Two search engines were used in my research to help identify authors and texts that referenced freedpersons. For the Greek sources, searches were done through *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, TLG (<http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu>). For the Latin sources, searches were done through *The Packard Humanities Institute: Classical Latin Texts*, PHI Latin Texts (<http://latin.packhum.org>).

few selected funerary inscriptions.⁴⁵ At the end of chapter 2, I compare the freedom and obligations that freedpersons would experience under the Greek and Roman manumission systems. Finally, I comment on the manumission practices in Asia Minor, the area of the Galatian churches. This exploration of Greek and Roman manumission helps establish how freedpersons in the Galatians churches would have experienced freedom and at what cost.

I explore the Greek, Roman, and Jewish concepts of freedom in chapter 3. While the concept of freedom can certainly be present even when the specific terminology is not, I limit my examination of the sources to the occurrences of the specific freedom terminology.⁴⁶ So although this exploration will not be exhaustive, it will still offer adequate evidence for the different concepts of freedom. For the Greek concept of freedom, I examine the archaic and classical Greek literature (800–323 BCE) and primarily focus on the use and context of the Greek word for “free,” ἐλεύθερος, and its derivatives. For the Roman concept of freedom, I explore literature written during the Roman Republic and Principate through the end of the first century CE, and I focus on the use and context of the primary Latin word for “free,” *liber*, and its derivatives. For both the Greek and Roman concepts of freedom, I examine the sources by genre rather than era. I explore literature from selected poets, playwrights, historians, and philosophers who were highly regarded by the ancient Greeks and Romans

45 I researched the Greek manumission inscriptions through *The Packard Humanities Institute*, PHI (<https://epigraphy.packhum.org>). When possible, I also consulted the published editions. I recorded and categorized information from each inscription for the following regions (number of inscriptions analyzed in parenthesis): Peloponnesos (28), Central Greece [Boeotia (38), Delphi (110), Aetolia (16), Akarnania (2), Lokris (71), Phokis (9), Thessalia (81), and Doris (1)], Northern Greece [Epeiros (155), Illyria (6), Macedonia (2)], Northern Black Sea (9), Aegean Islands (56), and Asia Minor (1). For some areas I recorded information on all available manumission inscriptions, while for other areas with significant numbers, such as Delphi, I selected a random subset. In total, I analyzed 585 inscriptions.

There is only one Latin manumission inscription (*CIL* 6.10229). For the Latin funerary inscriptions that had a bearing on manumission, particularly the make-up of slave families, I relied on the work of Mouritsen, *The Freedman*; Beryl Rawson, “Children in the Roman *Familia*,” in *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*, ed. Beryl Rawson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); P. R. C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor’s Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

46 I limit my exploration to the terminology for three reasons. One, to trace the concept of freedom as well as the terminology would be a large project—one worthy of a study entirely focused on that goal. Two, I am searching for the variety of concepts of freedom, and using the terminology to direct my search provides sufficient data to identify these concepts. And three, determining a concept of freedom apart from the terminology can be subjective; when specific terminology is present, it is clear the concept is there.

and for whom there is an adequate number of extant works to study.⁴⁷ This survey does not include all possible genres nor is it an exhaustive search within the selected genres, but it seeks to be representative enough to discover the variety of conceptions of freedom expressed by ancient Greeks and Romans. For the Jewish concept of freedom, I explore the Hebrew scriptures and the following genres of Jewish literature: Rewritten Bible,⁴⁸ history, and philosophy.⁴⁹ The Hebrew terms I focus on are the following words for “free” and “freedom”: חפשי, חפשי, חפשי, and דָּרוֹר. I also consider where the Septuagint translators chose to use ἐλεύθερος and its derivatives when rendering the original Hebrew into Greek. When the Jewish literature is written in Greek or Latin, I focus on the terms indicated earlier for those languages. At the end of chapter 3, I compare the Greek, Roman, and Jewish concepts of freedom and briefly consider Paul’s concept of freedom. Chapter 3, then, allows the twenty-first century reader to consider how an ancient Greek, Roman, or Jew—and particularly Paul himself—conceived of freedom.

In chapter 4, I trace the various terms and ideas associated with manumission and freedom through the book of Galatians and compare the freedom found in the lived experience of freedpersons with the freedom Paul proclaimed. I perform this analysis by considering the same topics explored for Greek and Roman manumission: reasons for providing freedom, means and cost of providing freedom, extent of freedom provided, and benefits of freedom. I conclude this chapter by considering how a freedperson would have likely heard the proclamation of Gal 5:1, “For freedom Christ set us free.”

47 I explain the choice of particular authors in each section in chapter 3.

48 Rewritten Bible is a genre first purposed by Géza Vermès in 1961. Géza Vermès, “The Genesis of the Concept of ‘Rewritten Bible,’” in *Rewritten Bible After Fifty Years: A Last Dialogue with Geza Vermes*, ed. József Zsengellér (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 3. I will comment more about this genre in that section.

49 I do not evaluate the Rabbinic literature nor the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls. I detail my specific reasons for omitting this literature in the Jewish Concepts of Freedom section of chapter 3.

Manumission and Circumscribed Freedom in Greece and Rome

The first-century Mediterranean world in which Paul lived and traveled made legal and social distinctions between those who were slaves and those who were free. Paul often reflects this worldview in his writings: “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28); “for in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, or slaves or free” (1 Cor 12:13).¹ But in 1 Cor 7:22, Paul writes that “the one who was called in the Lord as a slave is the Lord’s freedperson; likewise, the one who was called as a free person is Christ’s slave.” Here Paul breaks from the usual dichotomy of slave and free and uses the term “freedperson,” ἀπελεύθερος (*apeleutheros*).² This term specifically indicates a former slave who has been set free. What was the difference between someone who was a freedperson and someone who was freeborn? And what kind of freedom did a freed slave experience?

These questions are challenging because, while both the Greeks and Romans manumitted slaves and referred to these freed slaves as “freedpersons,” Greek and Roman legal and social constructs surrounding such people were different. And both constructs were still current in the wider Mediterranean culture when Paul was writing.³ To answer these questions then, I will examine the evidence for what led an owner (or other authority) to manumit a slave, how such a manumission took place, the cost to the slave for such freedom, the extent of freedom that a manumitted slave might experience, and the benefits of manumission.⁴ I will look first at Greek manumission, then Roman manumission, and then compare the two practices. In closing the chapter, I will consider the manumission practices active in Galatia during the first century CE.

1 In his disputed letters: Eph 6:8, Col 3:11.

2 This is the only occurrence of this word in either the LXX or the NT. This search was done using the computer software BibleWorks 9.0.

3 Maria S. Youni, “Transforming Greek Practice into Roman Law: Manumissions in Roman Macedonia,” *LHR* 78, no. 3/4 (2010): 338; Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free: The Concept of Manumission and the Status of Manumitted Slaves in the Ancient Greek World* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 9. This topic will be addressed further below.

4 As mentioned in the introduction, it may seem odd to explore the benefits of manumission. But since slaves usually paid a high price for a circumscribed freedom, it is important to explore the benefits they desired and received.

1 Greek Manumission

1.1 *Reasons for Manumission*

Aristotle wrote that “the household in its perfect form consists of slaves and freemen (δούλων καὶ ἐλευθέρων)” (*Pol.* 1253b5 [Rackham]). If the Greeks considered slaves integral to their way of life, as Aristotle suggests, then one might ask why a slave would ever be set free. But the testimony of the manumission inscriptions found throughout Greece and neighboring areas tells us that the Greeks did indeed manumit their slaves. These stony witnesses, however, only hint—and then only rarely—at *why* a slave was set free.

Greek manumission inscriptions are found not only throughout the mainland of Greece, but also on the Peloponnese, the north shore of the Black Sea, and the Aegean Islands.⁵ Many are found individually or in small groups, but others are found together in significant numbers. The largest number of manumission inscriptions are located at Delphi, just north of the Gulf of Corinth, where there are over one thousand inscriptions dating from 200 BCE to 100 CE.⁶ But there are also over one hundred and fifty manumission inscriptions at Bouthrotos in northwestern Greece (230–150 BCE),⁷ over ninety at Chaironeia in central Greece (late third–first century BCE),⁸ and about sixty on the Aegean

5 Those who have studied these inscriptions most thoroughly include Franz Bömer, *Untersuchungen über die Religion der Sklaven in Griechenland und Rom*, vol. 11: Die sogenannte sakrale Freilassung in Griechenland und die (δούλοι) ἱεροί (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1960); Aristide Calderini, *La manomissione e la condizione dei liberti in Grecia* (Milano: Hoepli, 1908); Herbert Rädle, “Untersuchungen zum griechischen Freilassungswesen” (PhD diss., Universität zu München, 1969); Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*.

6 These inscriptions can be found primarily in *Fouilles de Delphes*, vol. 3, Epigraphie (Paris: de Boccard, 1929–). Additional inscriptions can be found in the periodical *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, Paris (BCH); *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, vol. 2, ed. Hermann Collitz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1885–1899); and now in Anne Jacquemin, Dominique Mulliez, and Georges Rougemont, *Choix d'inscriptions de Delphes, traduites et commentées*, *Etudes épigraphiques* 5 (Athens: Ecole Française d'Athènes, 2012).

7 These inscriptions are available in Pierre Cabanes and Faik Drini, *Corpus des inscriptions grecques d'Illyrie méridionale et d'Épire* 2, *Etudes épigraphiques* 2 (Athens: Ecole française d'Athènes, 2007).

8 These inscriptions are available in Laurence Darmezin, *Les affranchissements par consécration en Béotie et dans le monde grec hellénistique*, *Etudes anciennes* 22 (Nancy: Association pour la diffusion de la recherche sur l'antiquité, 1999). This edition was not available to me, so I consulted the published edition of IG VII (Wilhelm Dittenberger, ed., *Inscriptiones Graecae*, vol. 7, *Inscriptiones Megaridis, Oropiae, Boeotiae* (Berolini: de Gruyter, 1892), where these inscriptions can also be found.

island of Calymna (14–54 CE).⁹ And when all the Thessalian cities in central Greece are considered as a group, there are over three hundred manumission inscriptions found in that area (early second century BCE–third century CE).¹⁰ Most of these Greek inscriptions record individual manumissions, but some inscriptions from Thessaly, Bouthrotos, Oiniades, and Athens include lists of slaves who were set free.¹¹ And yet with all these inscriptions, very few answer the question of why the manumission being recorded in such a permanent fashion took place.¹²

We have two inscriptions that indicate the manumitter is related to the person(s) he is releasing.¹³ The first inscription is from Chaironeia, where a man manumits his “son who was born to him by his $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ ” (IG VII 3301; late third/early second c. BCE).¹⁴ The second is from Thebes, where a man manumits his sons and then later his wife and their daughter (SEG 26.691; Rom. Imp. period). Other family relationships between the manumitter and the manumitted in the inscriptions are often speculated,¹⁵ but these are the only ones expressly stated.

There are a few inscriptions which appear to record the adoption of the manumitted slaves. Two are on the Aegean island of Calymna. The first inscription reads in part, “Euteridas proclaimed Epauchessin as free, on the condition that she use Euteridas’s name ($\chi\rho\eta\mu\alpha\tau\iota\epsilon\acute{\iota}$)” (TC 192a; ca. 14–54 CE). In the second inscription, Aphrodisia is set free and instructed to “use the name ($\chi\rho\eta\mu\alpha\tau\iota\epsilon\acute{\iota}$) of Nicomachus son of Philonidas” (TC 198; ca. 14–54 CE). Some scholars

9 These inscriptions are available in Mario Segre, *Tituli Calymnii* (Bergamo: Istituto italiano d’arti grafiche, 1952).

10 Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Taxing Freedom in Thessalian Manumission Inscriptions* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 29, 134. See her index (pp. 159–66) and list of abbreviations (pp. xi–xiv) for where these inscriptions are available.

11 Not all scholars agree that the *phialai* inscriptions from Athens are records of manumissions. These will be discussed further below.

12 Zelnick-Abramovitz does note that many of the manumission inscriptions from Leukopetra in northern Greece state the motive for manumission. Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 157. Since my focus is on understanding manumission in the first century CE, however, these inscriptions (dated 141–309 CE) are too late to inform that understanding.

13 As noted in *ibid.*, 167.

14 A $\theta\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ (*threptos*) was a slave raised from infancy in a household. This term is discussed more fully below. Translations of inscriptions throughout this chapter are my own unless otherwise indicated.

15 See for example Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 166–69.

argue that “to use the name” of someone indicated adoption.¹⁶ In Delphi the adoption idea is perhaps clearer, and scholars have noted two inscriptions that appear to speak of it.¹⁷ In one, Hedyla is set free and is to be “considered the daughter of Dorema and do for Dorema all that children properly do for their parents” (*SGDI* II 1803; 172 BCE).¹⁸ In another, the freed slave is to perform these same type of actions and to consider the manumitter as her father (*SGDI* II 1806; 171 BCE). These inscriptions do seem to indicate that adoption was one motive for manumitting a slave; although, given the rare reference, not a very common one.

On the north shore of the Black Sea, in the Bosporan region, there are three manumission inscriptions that state the owners manumitted their slaves due to a vow they made. One inscription reads in part, “I, Chreste, former wife of Drusus, set my slave Heraclas free once and for all in the prayer house (προσευχήν) according to my vow” (*CIRB* 70; 81 CE).¹⁹ Because some inscriptions in this area also refer to the synagogue of the Jews (συναγωγῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων) (*CIRB* 70, 71, 73; *SEG* 43.510), these manumitters are likely Diaspora Jews.²⁰ If these Jews were manumitting fellow Jews, we could look to the Jewish law and speculate that they were following the stipulations for manumission found there (Exod 21:2–11; Lev 25:39–43, 46–55; Deut 15:12–18); in other words, they could be

16 P. Roussel, “Affranchissement et adoption d'enfant à Calymnos,” *REA* 44, no. 3 (1942): 221; C. Bradford Welles, “Manumission and Adoption,” *RIDA* 3 (1949): 514–15; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 178.

17 Calderini, *La manomissione*, 293n7; Roussel, “Affranchissement et adoption,” 221; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 162.

18 Translation by Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 167.

19 See also *CIRB* 1123 (41 CE) and *CIRB* 1125 (93–124 CE). The first inscription is from Panticapaeum; the other two are from Gorgippia.

20 Bömer, *Religion der Sklaven*, 101; Erwin R. Goodenough, “The Bosphorus Inscriptions to the Most High God,” *JQR* 47, no. 3 (1957): 221–22; Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 13, 314n31; J. Andrew Overman, “Jews, Slaves, and the Synagogue on the Black Sea: The Bosporan Manumission Inscriptions and Their Significance for Diaspora Judaism,” in *Evolution of the Synagogue: Problems and Progress*, ed. Howard Clark Kee and Lynn H. Cohick (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 152–53. Gibson and Levinskaya, however, do not think this can be determined with any certainty. E. Leigh Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosporus Kingdom*, TSAJ 75 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 151; Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*, BAFCS 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 110n19. I think the occurrence of προσευχή and συναγωγή in these inscriptions and the archaeological evidence of a Jewish population in this area (see Overman's article) point to these manumitters being Jewish.

obeying their law code.²¹ It seems odd, however, to make a vow to obey a given law. If these Jews were manumitting Gentile slaves, we have no explanation of why they were releasing these slaves since the Jewish law did not require Jews to manumit Gentile slaves (Lev 25:44–46). So, while these inscriptions tell us that the owners made a vow to release their slaves, they do not tell us why.

There are three specific terms used to describe slaves being set free in many inscriptions: σύντροφος (*syntrophos*), θρεπτός (*threptos*), and οἰκογενής (*oikogenēs*).²² The first is *syntrophos* which we find in an inscription from Peloponnesian Orchomenos: “Damoxenus son of [—], from Orchomenus, sets free Sosicles, his own foster-brother (σύν[τροφος]) ... according to the last wish of the dying Damoxenus son of Hagias” (IG V(2) 345a; 79/78 BCE).²³ Alan Cameron concludes that *syntrophos* was a term used to identify children who were raised in the same home, whether slave or free; it was a relational term, not a legal term.²⁴ Perhaps Sosicles received his freedom due to his close relationship with this family. The inscription does not state this explicitly, however, and it is important to note that the word itself, σύντροφος, is restored (as indicated).²⁵

The second, and related, term describing a freed slave is θρεπτός (*threptos*). In the area of Chaironeia in Boeotia, almost all the inscriptions describe the manumitted slave in some manner: “my own female slave (τὴν φιδίαν θεράπηναν),”²⁶ “my own slave (τὰς φιδίας δούλας/τὸν φίδιον δούλον),”²⁷ “my own little slave girl (τὰ ἴδια δουλικά κοράσια),”²⁸ or “my own θρεπτάν/θρεπτόν.”²⁹ Cameron

21 It is questioned, however, if the law codes concerning the release of Jewish slaves were still being followed by the Jews in the first century CE (Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 8), or if they were “actually practiced even in biblical times” (p. 29). See also Gibson, *Jewish Manumission Inscriptions*, 72, 93–94.

22 There is one more, ἀμμάν (*amman*, foster-mother, nurse), but it only occurs twice (TC 170, 189).

23 Translation by Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 176.

24 Alan Cameron, “ΘΡΕΠΤΟΣ and Related Terms in the Inscriptions of Asia Minor,” in *Anatolian Studies Presented to William Hepburn Buckler*, ed. W. M. Calder and Josef Keil (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1939), 47.

25 Another inscription from the island of Calymna reads, “I, Apollonius, set free my foster-brother (σύντροφόν), Agathopoda” (TC 181; ca. 14–54 CE). Here, the term is clearly found (not restored), but we still must surmise that the relationship is what led to the manumission.

26 IG VII 3302, 3303, 3313, 3412; SEG 28.444, 28.445, 28.450, 49.510, 49.511.

27 IG VII 3305, 3309, 3314, 3317, 3321, 3322, 3323, 3324, 3327, 3329, 3330, 3332, 3333, 3343, 3348, 3349, 3350, 3354, 3356, 3357, 3358, 3359, 3362, 3363, 3365, 3371, 3386, 3387.

28 IG VII 3325, 3328.

29 IG VII 3304, 3312, 3315, 3316, 3326, 3352, 3353, 3366, 3376, 3377, 3378; SEG 28.446, 28.447, 28.448, 28.449, 28.451, 28.452.

suggests that *threptos* designated “a child reared from infancy, and probably, though evidence here is lacking, was applied to the purchased child as well as to the slave born in the household or rescued from exposure.”³⁰ Like *syntrophos*, *threptos* was not a legal term but rather indicated a type of “quasi-filial relationship” with the one who owned them.³¹ Did this particular relationship lead to their manumission? If we look at the inscriptions just considered, they do not appear to support this as a motivation: while there were seventeen inscriptions that tell of *threptoi* being manumitted, there are forty that tell of slaves, slave women, and little slave girls being manumitted. At Delphi, where the slaves being manumitted are regularly identified as a female body (σῶμα γυναικεῖον) or a male body (σῶμα ἀνδρεῖον), they are rarely identified as a *threptos*.³² On the island of Calymna, where the term is more common, only about one third of the freed slaves were identified as *threptoi*. Of the sixteen manumission inscriptions found in the Bosporan region located on the north shore of the Black Sea,³³ many of which are fragmentary, seven identified the slaves as *threptoi*. To make any assertion based on the surviving manumission inscriptions is a risky endeavor: many inscriptions have been lost to history, and most manumissions were probably never recorded in such a costly fashion. But given the inscriptions we do have, it would be difficult to argue that a slave who was a *threptos* was more likely to be manumitted than one who was not. What evidence we have shows no such advantage.

The third term describing a freed slave is οἰκογενής (*oikogenēs*), homeborn slave. This term is found primarily in inscriptions from central Greece—Aetolia, Delphi, and Locris. At Delphi *oikogenēs* occurs about 225 times,³⁴ usually as a further description of the more general “female/male body.” This term, then, occurs much more frequently than *threptos* but still much less than the general identification of female and male bodies. Cameron argues that, while the two terms do overlap in meaning, *oikogenēs* is a legal designation where *threptos* is relational one.³⁵ Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz concludes that *oikogenēs* is simply “one more identifying mark, intended to enable the manumitted slave

30 Cameron, “ΘΡΕΠΤΟΣ and Related Terms,” 53.

31 Ibid. Some of these slaves might have been the actual children of the owner and one of his slaves. Ibid., 41.

32 A search in *PHI* (<https://epigraphy.packhum.org>) of the Delphi records found 485 occurrences of σῶμα γυναικεῖον, 278 occurrences of σῶμα ἀνδρεῖον, and only 21 occurrences of θρεπτός.

33 Gibson, *Jewish Manumission Inscriptions*, 98.

34 This search was done in *PHI*.

35 Cameron, “ΘΡΕΠΤΟΣ and Related Terms,” 52–53.

to prove his or her identity when needed.”³⁶ Nonetheless, she goes on to suggest that the identification of this quasi-familial relationship may indicate the motivation of the manumission. Keith Hopkins’s assessment of the Delphi inscriptions, however, does not support this conjecture. Half of the Delphi inscriptions did not designate the origin of the slave.³⁷ Of the remaining, the overall number of home-born slaves was 27%, but in one period it was as high as 44%.³⁸ The evidence is obviously incomplete, but what there is does not show that home-born slaves were manumitted at a higher rate. In addition, when Hopkins examined the prices for manumission, he observed that “being home-born counted for little when the master fixed the price of a slave’s release.”³⁹

The literary sources shed a little more light on why the ancient Greeks manumitted their slaves.⁴⁰ The state sometimes manumitted slaves for the purpose of war. Thucydides (ca. 460–404 BCE) writes that both sides of a civil war in Corcyra offered freedom to slaves who would join the fighting: “On the next day they skirmished a little, and both parties sent messengers round into the fields, calling upon the slaves and offering them freedom” (3.73 [Smith]).⁴¹ Aristophanes (ca. 446–386 BCE), in his play *Frogs*, refers to slaves who fought at sea in the battle of Arginusae in 406 BCE being given their freedom (33–34, 692–694).⁴²

The state could also manumit slaves as a reward for testimony in court that benefitted the community in some manner.⁴³ This reason for manumission is only attested in Athens. Lysias (c.445–c.380 BCE), an Athenian orator, writes

36 Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 180.

37 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 139.

38 Ibid., 141.

39 Ibid., 167. Zelnick-Abramovitz herself notes that in Locris “home-born slaves actually paid more for their freedom.” Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 170.

40 These literary sources tend to be primarily, if not solely, earlier and Athenian. In contrast, the manumission inscriptions are usually later and found throughout Greece and beyond, but rarely in and around Athens. See Kurt Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*, trans. Renate Franciscano (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 13; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 62.

41 For other references by the historians of slaves being freed for military service see Thuc. 4.26.5, 5.34.1, 8.15.2; Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.28; Cyr. 4.5.56–57; Diod. Sic. 20.100.1.

42 In addition, Aristotle (384–322 BCE) attests that this was a method used to gain military advantage (*Pol.* 1315a [Rackham]). For further references to this reason for manumission see Calderini, *La manomissione*, 165–72; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 70.

43 Garlan notes that slaves could be rewarded their freedom for testifying against “an act of treachery, sacrilege, seizure of public funds, or a violation of the regulations governing wheat supplies.” Yvon Garlan, *Slavery in Ancient Greece*, trans. Janet Lloyd, revised and expanded ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 82–83.

of a court case in which a man is accused of removing a sacred olive stump, and the defendant comments that “it was in [my slaves’] power at once to be avenged on me and to win their own freedom by informing against me” (7.16 [Lamb]).⁴⁴ Plato, in the laws for his ideal city, awards freedom to slaves who help a parent who is beaten by their child (*Leg.* 881b–c), who report people who take other’s treasure (*Leg.* 914a), and who report a parent who is maltreated (*Leg.* 932d). Whether or not Plato’s laws reflect actual Athenian laws, Plato at least expresses the idea that the state could reward slaves with their freedom when it deemed their behavior worthy of such benefit. Robin Osborne looks at both Lysias and Plato and argues that all of these actions involve behavior that would offend the gods, and thus only when “the wrath of the gods” is to be averted are slaves offered to testify and receive their freedom if their testimony holds true.⁴⁵

The literary sources also indicate a few reasons individuals manumitted their slaves. Some individuals manumitted their slaves as a type of reward. An owner might manumit a slave as a reward for years of hard work and good conduct. In his *Politics*, Aristotle (384–322 BCE) makes the comment, “How slaves should be employed, and why it is advantageous that all slaves should have their freedom set before them as a reward, we will say later” (1330a.32–34 [Rackham]), although he never returns to the subject.⁴⁶ Theophrastus in his will, as reported by Diogenes Laertius (third century CE), directs that two slaves are to receive their freedom after working in a garden for four years and if “their conduct is free from blame” (5.55.3–5 [Hicks]).⁴⁷ Slaves might also be manumitted as a reward for a specific action. In Euripides’s play, *Children of Heracles*, a messenger brings Alcmene, the mother of Heracles, good news of Athens’ victory in battle and she tells him, “Because of your message I set you free!” (789 [Kovacs]). Although this play is a patriotic account of Athens’ history, this vignette perhaps gives us a glimpse into how arbitrary manumission might have been. Regardless, manumission by an individual was always dependent upon his or her willingness to provide the slave freedom; thus, gaining the owner’s favor was critical to achieving manumission.

44 Lysias writes of another case where a man is charged with sacrilege and his slaves testify in court against him “in the hope of freedom” (5.3 [Lamb]).

45 Robin Osborne, “Religion, Imperial Politics and the Offering of Freedom to Slaves,” in *Law and Social Status in Classical Athens*, ed. Virginia J. Hunter and J. C. Edmondson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 89.

46 See also Arist., [*Oec.*] 1344b.15–17.

47 See also Diog. Laert. 5.15.7–8. Although we cannot know if these wills are authentic, they still likely represent the practice of manumitting slaves as a reward for service.

In addition, individuals might manumit slaves who were their love interest. In *Against Athenogenes*, Epicrates lusts after a slave boy owned by another man and offers to pay the owner for the boy's freedom (Hyp., *Athen.* 5–6). Deborah Kamen notes that “apart from this example, in most instances the beloved slave in question is female, generally a *hetaira*, and often the ‘buyer’s’ aim is to acquire her as his (free) concubine.”⁴⁸ Kamen comments that these manumissions could have been motivated by affection, but were likely motivated by something more base.⁴⁹

In summary, the Greek literature indicates that states manumitted slaves for the purpose of war and as a reward for testimony in court. Individual owners manumitted slaves as a reward for years of hard work and good conduct and perhaps for specific acts they deemed particularly worthy. Some slaves were manumitted because they were their manumitters’ “love” interest. The Greek inscriptions indicate that two owners manumitted slaves because they were their children or the mother of their children. A few slaves were also manumitted for the purpose of adoption. Some owners made and fulfilled a vow to set a slave free, but we do not know what compelled the owner to make the vow. And while many slaves are identified as “raised in the home” (*threptos*) or “homeborn” (*oikogenēs*), there is no indication that these quasi-familial relationships led to their manumission. Other slaves who did not have this designation were manumitted in equal, or higher, numbers. This is the scant evidence that remains for the motives behind Greek manumission. One motive the sources do not mention, but scholars assert surely existed, is economic: since most slaves paid for their manumission, owners could replace them with younger and healthier slaves.⁵⁰ We might wish to find more humanitarian reasons, and speculation often runs along this line, but our sources do not offer them. Perhaps this is because we fundamentally misunderstand manumission: it primarily served to incentivize slaves to work hard and be faithful. In serving this purpose, manumission did not make slavery—or those who engaged in it—more humanitarian; it simply perpetuated the institution.⁵¹

48 Deborah Kamen, “Sale for the Purpose of Freedom: Slave-Prostitutes and Manumission in Ancient Greece,” *CJ* 109, no. 3 (2014): 299. She lists examples of these manumissions found in literature on pages 299–301.

49 *Ibid.*, 302–303.

50 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 118, 131; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 151.

51 Hopkins explains, “It was sensible for masters to opt for the carrot rather than or in addition to the stick. The prospect of buying freedom encouraged a slave to show both initiative and parsimony.... If the slave died before achieving liberty, the master pocketed his savings.... If the slave later bought full freedom, the master had recapitalized the slave’s value and with the purchase money he could buy a younger slave to replace him.” Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 147.

1.2 *Means of Manumission*

Through the years, scholars have attempted to classify the various Greek manumission practices. Aristide Calderini in 1908 provided one of the earliest and most complete investigations into Greek manumission. He divided manumissions into ordinary and extraordinary and subdivided the ordinary into religious and civil.⁵² Zelnick-Abramovitz explains that the categories of extraordinary and ordinary can be called public and private, “that is, manumissions initiated by the state and those initiated by private owners.”⁵³ The difference between religious and civil manumissions is whether or not the gods or their sanctuaries were involved in some manner. There has been some discussion concerning which mode of manumission, civil or religious, might have developed first.⁵⁴ Others, however, rightly point out that secular and sacred were closely intertwined in ancient Greece, and there is often no clear distinction in these manumission practices—sometimes both civil and religious authorities were involved.⁵⁵ Therefore, I will not categorize the different modes of Greek manumission by subdividing them into civil or religious, but will simply categorize them as public or private.

1.2.1 Public Manumission

Public manumissions are those initiated by the state. Calderini labeled these manumissions as “extraordinary” because they involved special circumstances and occurred much less often than private manumissions. As mentioned above, the state manumitted privately-owned slaves for the purpose of war or as a reward for testimony in court. But the mode of manumission used to free these slaves is not given; likely it was public proclamation followed by publication.

1.2.2 Private Manumission

Private manumissions are those initiated by private owners. As can be deduced by Calderini’s label of this category as “ordinary,” it was the common means of manumission in ancient Greece.⁵⁶ An owner could free a slave through a will,

52 Calderini, *La manomissione*, 94–95.

53 Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 70.

54 Bömer, *Religion der Sklaven*, 120; F. Sokolowski, “The Real Meaning of Sacral Manumission,” *HTR* 47, no. 3 (1954): 179. Gibson discusses these views and concludes that no direction of development can be determined. Gibson, *Jewish Manumission Inscriptions*, 312.

55 W. R. Connor, “‘Sacred’ and ‘Secular’: Ἱερὰ καὶ ὅσια and the Classical Athenian Concept of the State,” *AncSoc* 19 (1988): 184; Garland, *Slavery in Ancient Greece*, 76–77; Youni, “Greek Practice,” 315; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 188n10, 197.

56 With the exception of Sparta, where the state outlawed private manumission (Ephorus *FGrHist* 70 F117). See David Lewis, “Slavery and Manumission,” in *The Oxford Handbook*

a public proclamation, a fictive sale, a fictive consecration, or by a simple declaration among witnesses.⁵⁷ The primary source for private manumissions is inscriptions.

1.2.2.1 *Testament*

The Greeks sometimes manumitted slaves by means of a will. A testamentary inscription from Mantinea reads in part, “Pitylus, son of Poseidipus, sets free (ἀφῆκε ... ἐλευθέραν) his own female slave, Sapho, and the child born to her, Onesiphorus, so that they will in no way belong to anyone” (IG V(2) 274.1; 102 BCE–16 CE).⁵⁸ This inscription references both religious and civil officials. A testamentary inscription at Delphi includes a list of witnesses (SGDI II 2084; 184 BCE).⁵⁹ These officials and witnesses, and the stone inscriptions themselves, would ensure the freedom of the manumitted slaves. Diogenes Laertius (third century CE) records the wills of several philosophers. Although he is late and the authenticity of these wills cannot be determined, they nonetheless represent the practice of testamentary manumission. Aristotle (384–322 BCE) provides in his will for “Ambracis to be free (εἶναι ... ἐλευθέραν)” and given both money and the young slave girl she already has (5.14.8–10), and he instructs that three of his other slaves and a child that belongs to one of them receive their freedom when his daughter marries (5.15.3–5). His personal slaves are not to be sold, but when “they arrive at the proper age they shall have their freedom if

of *Ancient Greek Law*, ed. Edward Harris and Mirko Canevaro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

- 57 There is one more type that some scholars call manumission through *dikai apostasiou*. We only have evidence for this type of manumission (if indeed it is manumission) in Athens for the years 330–322 BCE. There are inscriptions which include about 300 dedications of silver bowls by freedpersons, *φιάλαι ἐξελευθερικαί* (IG II(2) 1553–78). Westermann suggests that “the names of freedmen were those of persons who had been acquitted in court trials, called *dikai apostasiou*, with the explanation that these ‘trials for abandonment’ were merely ‘feigned,’ or pro forma, actions in imitation of actual *dikai apostasiou*.” William L. Westermann, “Two Studies in Athenian Manumission,” *JNES* 5, no. 1 (1946): 95. Zelnick-Abramovitz argues that these were genuine trials. Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 285. Meyer contends that they were unsuccessful trials against metics for nonpayment of the metic-tax. Elizabeth A. Meyer, *Metics and the Athenian Phialai-Inscriptions: A Study in Athenian Epigraphy and Law* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010), 28. I concur with Lewis when he concludes that “the truth of the matter is that our evidence is inadequate,” and thus we cannot determine what these inscriptions commemorate. David Lewis, “Attic Manumissions,” *Hesperia* 28, no. 3 (1959): 238.
- 58 See also IG XI(2) 546 (131/132 CE) from Larisa, and IG IX(2) 118b (undated) from Magnesia. Calderini also lists IG V(2) 345 (79/78 BCE) from Peloponnesian Orchomenos and IG VII 3338 (third/early second c. BCE) from Chaironeia but the key term (διέθετο, διαθεικη respectively) is restored in both inscriptions. Calderini, *La manomissione*, 131–32.
- 59 See also SGDI II 2101 (182/181 BCE).

they deserve it (ἐλευθέρους ἀφεῖναι κατ' ἄξιαν) (5.15.6–8 [Hicks]). Other slaves remain a part of his estate (5.13.11–15.1).⁶⁰ Aristotle names the executors of his will, again ensuring the freedom of the slaves he manumits.

1.2.2.2 *Public Proclamation*

There is some evidence that owners could manumit their slaves by announcing their freedom in a public place, like an assembly, altar, or theater.⁶¹ Making the proclamation in public would ensure the freedom of the manumitted slave. Several inscriptions on the island of Calymna begin, “These have been proclaimed free by a herald (τοῖδε ἐκαρχύθησαν ἐλεύθεροι),” and then proceed to list the slaves and those who manumitted them.⁶² Aeschines (389–314 BCE), in an Athenian court case, refers to a law that, in part, forbid what appeared to be the regular practice of manumitting slaves by proclamation in the theater (*Ctes.* 41–44). According to Aeschines, this mode of manumission was outlawed due to the disturbance it caused in the theater (*Ctes.* 44).⁶³ In Epidaurus, there are inscriptions engraved on the theater seats which most scholars identify as manumission inscriptions (*IG* IV(2) 353–379; late third c. BCE or later). Herbert Rädle associates these inscriptions with the proclamations made in theaters, providing a permanent record of the proclamations.⁶⁴

1.2.2.3 *Fictive Sale*

Slaves in Greece could not legally transact business for themselves, so even if they managed to acquire the funds to buy their freedom and their owner(s) agreed to such a paid release, they required a third party to make the transaction occur legally.⁶⁵ Scholars identify these as fictive sales because the slave is

60 Other philosophers also set slaves free in their wills, as recorded by Diogenes Laertius: Plato (3.42.9–10), Theophrastus (5.55.1–3), Strato (5.63.10–12), Lyco (5.72.13–73.2, 9–11), and Epicurus (10.21.8–10).

61 Herbert Rädle, “Freilassung von Sklaven im Theater,” *RIDA* 18 (1971): 362.

62 *TC* 163, 164, 178 (14–54 CE). Two inscriptions use similar language but only record the manumission of one slave: *TC* 192, 196. At Mantinea there are two manumission inscriptions that record proclamations: *IG* V(2) 274, II (103 BCE–15 CE), *IG* V(2) 342a (first/second c. CE).

63 This law and its implications are explored at length in Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz, “Freed Slaves, Their Status and State Control in Ancient Greece,” *ERH* 16, no. 3 (2009): 304–306.

64 Rädle, “Freilassung von Sklaven im Theater,” 363. We also have evidence that a proclamation was made at a tomb. An inscription from Boeotian Thespieae states in part that “upon the death of Eutychos, a herald will proclaim (ἀπ[ο]καρυξάτω) on his tomb that Eutychos set free the (aforementioned) slaves (ἐλεύθερα [οὔτ]α τὰ σῶ[μ]ατα ἀφίεντα)” (*IG* VII 1780; second c. BCE).

65 Moritz Bloch, “Die Freilassungsbedingungen der delphischen Freilassungsinschriften” (PhD diss., Kaiser Wilhelms-Universität, 1914), 8; Youni, “Greek Practice,” 316.

“sold” with the result that he or she is to be free.⁶⁶ We find evidence for fictive sales to a divinity and fictive sales to a person, the first being much more common than the second.

Inscriptions that reflect the fictive sale to a divinity are all located in central Greece: Acarnania, Aetolia, Delphi, Doris, and Locris. Most of the manumission inscriptions at Delphi are of this type. One inscription reads in part:

Polemarchos and Kleareta sold (ἀπέδοντο) to the Pythian Apollo, a female slave, whose name is Athenais, for the price (τιμή) of five minae, and we have received the whole price (τιμή), even as she entrusted to the god the contract (τὰν ὀνάν);⁶⁷ on condition that she is to be free (ἐφ’ ᾧ τε ἔλευ[θέρα]ν⁶⁸ εἶμεν).... So also, we have stood before the guarantor according to the law of the city (κατὰ τὸν νόμον τᾷς πόλεως). (FD 3.6.121; 47–66 CE)

66 Finley notes that “legal fictions were familiar in Greece, as in every other civilized society.” M. I. Finley, “The Problem of the Unity of Greek Law,” in *The Use and Abuse of History* (New York: Viking, 1975), 143. Sosin, however, argues that these sales to the gods were not fictive but actual sales in which the gods purchased the slaves and then set them free. Joshua D. Sosin, “Manumission with Paramone: Conditional Freedom?” *TAPA* 145, no. 2 (2015): 348. Sosin’s argument concerning *paramone*, to be discussed later, lends some credence to his assertion.

67 Many scholars render τὰν ὀνάν in these Delphi inscriptions as “sale” or “sale price”: Gibson, *Jewish Manumission Inscriptions*, 42; Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 143; Deborah Kamen, “Manumission, Social Rebirth, and Healing Gods in Ancient Greece,” in *Slaves and Religions in Graeco-Roman Antiquity and Modern Brazil*, ed. Stephen Hodkinson and Dick Geary (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), 181; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 87. The Greek term ὀνή (*ōnē*) can be translated as “purchase-money” or “price.” When referencing Doric inscriptions, however, such as those found in Delphi, LSJ suggests the gloss of “deed of sale, contract” (p. 2034). It should also be noted that the terminology in these inscriptions changes from the price (τιμή) paid and the owners receiving the price (τιμή) in full, to the slave entrusting the contract (*ōnē*) to the god. The context suggests that *ōnē* is referencing something besides the money that changed hands. In addition, there are manumissions that speak of the *ōnē* being made ἀτελὴς καὶ ἄκυρος, incomplete and invalid (i.e., *SGDI* II 1702). Laura Nasrallah translates ὀνή as “contract.” Laura Salah Nasrallah, “‘You Were Bought with a Price’: Freedpersons and Things in 1 Corinthians,” in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Sarah A. James, and Daniel N. Schowalter, *NovTSup*, vol. 155 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 69. The work of Maria Youni provides some ground for this understanding. Youni argues that it was common for Macedonian sacral manumissions to reference a manumission document, and that the inscription was perhaps a summary of a document held in the temple or in a city’s archives. Youni, “Greek Practice,” 317–19.

68 As indicated, this word has been reconstructed in this inscription, but the frequency of this phrase in the Delphi inscriptions makes the reconstruction almost certain.

So, while this slave is “sold” to the god—here, Pythian Apollo—she does not become a slave to the god. The god is the intermediary and provides the means for the purchase money to exchange hands. The god, or the shrine of the god, is also acting as the repository of the contract that provides proof of the slave’s manumission. The inscription also notes, however, that the “law of the city” has been followed, and almost all of these inscriptions include a list of witnesses. So, there are both religious and civil elements in this mode of manumission, and both elements serve to guarantee the slave’s freedom.

Fictive sale to a person is only mentioned in Greek literary sources and then only rarely.⁶⁹ The most famous one is the case of Neaera, which is recounted by an unknown author, although credited to Demosthenes (fourth century BCE).⁷⁰ Neaera, a former *hetaera* (courtesan), bought her freedom from her two owners by gathering her own funds and funds from former clients. Because she could not represent herself legally, she approached yet another former client, Phrynion. He supplied the remaining balance and gave the money to her owners so that she might be free (ἐπ’ ἐλευθερίᾳ) (Dem., [*Neaer.*] 59.30–32). Since Phrynion did not purchase Neaera with the funds, but rather acted as a third party so that Neaera could purchase her freedom, this exchange is considered a fictive sale.⁷¹ Herodotus provides another example, again of a *hetaera*, by the name of Rhodopis. She was brought to Egypt by her owner, Xanthos, but “upon her arrival was freed (ἐλύθη) for a lot of money by Kharaxus of Mytilene” (*Hist.* 2.135). Herodotus goes on to clearly state, “Thus Rhodopis was set free (ἐλευθερώθη).”⁷²

1.2.2.4 Fictive Consecration

Fictive consecration involves a slave being dedicated, or consecrated, to a divinity by his or her owner(s) with the result that the slave is set free. Outside the area around Delphi, fictive consecration was widespread and perhaps

69 Kamen, “Sale for the Purpose of Freedom,” 289–90.

70 Demosthenes, *Orations* 50–59, trans. A. T. Murray, LCL 351 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 349. Most scholars dispute that Demosthenes was the author of *Oration* 59, the story of Neaera.

71 Kamen, “Sale for the Purpose of Freedom,” 293; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 81–82.

72 One other example of a proposed fictive sale is found in Hyp. *Athen.* 5–6. Sosin argues that these examples are not fictive sales (although he does not address Rhodopis) because the slaves in view were not sold—there was only payment on condition of freedom. Sosin, “Manumission with Paramone,” 360, 365. The concept behind these manumissions, nonetheless, is remarkably similar: the person who paid money to the owner of the slave did so on the condition that the slave be set free. One could argue this is a word/concept fallacy—even without the vocabulary of selling, a fictive sale has taken place.

practiced the longest, from the fifth century BCE through the third century CE.⁷³ We find fictive consecration inscriptions in the Peloponnese, Central Greece, Northern Greece, the north shore of the Black Sea, and even one south of the Caspian Sea.

Some of these inscriptions specifically mention freedom, while others do not. In Boeotian Chaeronea, one such inscription reads in part, "Pourippos, son of Proxenos, dedicates as sacred (ἀντίθειμι ἱεράν) his own female slave, Aphroditia, to Sarapis ... having made the dedication through the Council according to the law" (*IG* VII 3303; late third/early second c. BCE). What complicates these dedications in Chaeronea is that there is no mention of freedom.⁷⁴ In Bouthrotos, however, freedom is almost always mentioned. One of these inscriptions reads in part, "Pyrrhos Delios and his son Alkimos set free and dedicate as sacred (ἀφίεντι ἐλευθέραν καὶ ἀνατίθεντι ἱεράν) to Asclepios, Philoumena" (*I.Bouthrotos* 67; ca. 163–158 BCE). If freedom is not stipulated, were the slaves set free or dedicated as slaves to serve the god's shrine or temple? While Westermann argues at length that the Greek gods and their temples had no slaves,⁷⁵ Gibson asserts there is evidence to the contrary.⁷⁶ Recognizing then that some temples did have slaves, scholars consider these consecration inscriptions to be slave manumissions unless a slave is expressly declared to be a temple slave or required to provide full-time service to the temple.⁷⁷

In most of these inscriptions, witnesses are listed. The inscriptions from Chaeronea do not include witnesses, however, but almost all end with a reference to the council and the law (as seen in the inscription above). John Fossey concludes that this law must have "reduced the necessity either for the very

73 Youni, "Greek Practice," 316, 340. Youni and Deissmann, among others, conclude that Christian manumission performed within the church (*manumission in ecclesia*) was based upon this Greek practice. See *ibid.*, 340; Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1923; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 322.

74 Three inscriptions say that the slave is set free (ἀφίᾱσι ... ἐλευθέραν) or simply released (ἀφίᾱσι) and sacred (ἱεράν) to Sarapis but no verb for "dedicate" is used: *IG* VII 3321, 3327 (mid/late second c. BCE); *SEG* 28.452 (late third/early second c. BCE).

75 William L. Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1955), 46–57.

76 Gibson, *Jewish Manumission Inscriptions*, 43n31.

77 For a list of such scholars see *ibid.*, 49 and n44. See also Stefano G. Caneva and Aurian Delli Pizzi, "Given to a Deity? Religious and Social Reappraisal of Human Consecrations in the Hellenistic and Roman East," *CIQ* 65, no. 1 (2015): 171–72. Contra Sara L. Zanolle, "Some Remarks on Manumission and Consecration in Hellenistic Chaeronea," *JGS* 3, no. 1–2 (2018).

presence of witnesses or at least the mention of them.”⁷⁸ These consecration inscriptions then, together with witnesses or provision in a law, provided a guarantee of the slave’s freedom.

1.2.2.5 *Simple Declaration*

Finally, individual Greeks could manumit their slaves by simply declaring that a particular slave was set free. There is an Athenian court case, in which Demosthenes (384–322 BCE) testifies that his father, on his death-bed, set a slave free, with his wife, son, and daughter as witnesses (3 *Aphob.* 25–26). In the fictional slave biography, *Life of Aesop* (written ca. first century CE), Aesop maneuvers his master, Xanthus, into giving him his freedom. Xanthus then does so by simply saying, “Xanthus, requested by the people of Samos, sets Aesop free (ἀφίησιν ἐλεύθερον)” (*Vit. Aesop* G 90). Although this is a fictional account, it still likely reflects the practices of its time—which may go as far back as the fourth century BCE in the oral phase of its history.⁷⁹

Many of our extant inscriptions are probably the publication record of manumissions performed by simple declaration. These inscriptions do not indicate *how* the manumission took place; instead, they simply serve as a permanent record *that* it took place. They often indicate that the manumission took place according to the law of a particular city and, when required, that the appropriate fees were paid. Witnesses—secular, sacred, or both—are often noted. Since many of these inscriptions do not reference a deity or temple, they are usually categorized as “civil.” As noted, however, some of these inscriptions can reference both gods and civil authorities and this causes problems for scholars in categorizing these “mixed” manumissions. There are a few inscriptions that have been called “protection by a deity,”⁸⁰ but these only indicate that the manumission took place “before the god”⁸¹ or “in the prayerhouse.”⁸² As

78 John M. Fossey, “Dedication and More Manumissions from Khaironeia (in Collaboration with Laurence Darmezin),” in *Epigraphica Boeotica II: Further Studies on Boiotian Inscriptions* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 257.

79 Keith Hopkins, “Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery,” *P&P*, no. 138 (1993): 4n3; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 55.

80 Calderini, *La manomissione*, 104.

81 In Thespieae in central Greece: *Thesp* 213 (second c. BCE), 214 (after 240 BCE) and 216 (second c. BCE); in northern Greece in Dodona: *SEG* 54.578 (164 BCE), *SEG* 26.704 (early second c. BCE); in Bouthrotos in northern Greece: *I.Bouthrotos* 20, 40, and 46 (all after 163 BCE). *Les Inscriptions de Thespies* is available online at <http://www.hisoma.mom.fr/production-scientifique/les-inscriptions-de-thespies>.

82 *CIRB* 70 (81 CE), 71 (first c. CE), 73 (100–150 CE), 1123 (41 CE); *SEG* 46.960 (51 CE). Since no deity is named, Gibson argues that these should be considered “civil” manumissions. Gibson, *Jewish Manumission Inscriptions*, 151.

Zelnick-Abramovitz notes, “the divinities play no active role; they are simply invoked as guarantors of the manumitted slaves or as witnesses to the act.”⁸³ In the end, none of these inscriptions indicate *how* the manumission took place.

These types of inscriptions, which record manumissions but do not indicate the manner in which they took place, are found in Mantinea, Messene, and Orchomenos in the Peloponnese, Phokis and Thessaly in central Greece, Dodona and Apollonia in northern Greece, and Calymna and Lemnos of the Aegean Islands.⁸⁴ The first part of an inscription from Orchomenos reads,

Since [—] ... paid the secretary of the Councilors, on account of his manumission (ἀπελευθερώσις), half a silver mina according to the law, it was decided by the archons and the Councilors that the δαμουργοί of the seventieth year shall inscribe the manumission (ἀπελευθέρωσιν) of Sosikles on the altar of Aphrodite.⁸⁵ (IG V(2) 345a; 79/78 BCE)

This inscription records the fact of the manumission, but not how it occurred. It involved secular officials, a fee for publication, and the inscription being placed in the shrine of Aphrodite, thus ensuring the freedom of the manumitted slave. In the area of Larisa in Thessaly, some of the inscriptions actually indicate the mode of manumission: “Those among the manumitted slaves who paid to the city what is due according to the law: on the twenty-eighth day of the month of Panemos, Menon, declared (ὁ φάμενος) to be manumitted by Menestratos son of Portinos, the due fifteen staters to the city” (SEG 31.577; c.136/135 BCE).⁸⁶ Here we read that the slave was “declared” manumitted. This verb means simply “to say”; a different verb from that found in the public proclamation inscriptions (ἐκαρύχθησαν). The fee paid—almost always the same amount in these inscriptions—is most likely a registration and publication fee since it is paid to the city.⁸⁷ Thus, the inscription serves to ensure the freedom of the manumitted slave.

83 Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 87.

84 See also Calderini's categorization and list of locations of “civil” manumissions. Calderini, *La manomissione*, 125.

85 Translation by Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Taxing Freedom*, 81.

86 Translation by *ibid.*, 34.

87 Zelnick-Abramovitz notes that “these payments should not be confused with the money paid by the freed slaves to their ex-owners as the price of freedom (often described as λύτρον).” *Ibid.*, 48. She goes on to argue that this fee is a registration and publication fee rather than a manumission tax.

1.2.2.6 According to the Law

Many of the manumission inscriptions include the phrase “according to the law (κατὰ τὸν νόμον).” This phrase is in the simple declaration manumissions from Thessaly, in the fictive consecrations from Boeotia, and in the fictive sales to a deity from Delphi. In the fictive consecrations found at Bouthrotos in northern Greece, there is the more specific phrase “according to the law of the childless (κατὰ τὸν τῶν ἀτέκνων νόμον).” And in the simple declarations and one proclamation inscription from Calymna, there is another specific phrase, “according to the laws of the manumitted (κατὰ τοὺς ἀπελευθερωτικούς νόμους).” Did these laws dictate the manner in which the manumission took place? It is important to note that there was not one law for Greece; unlike Rome, each city or federation of cities created their own laws.⁸⁸ Examining the “laws of the childless” in Bouthrotos, Pierre Cabanes and Faik Drini conclude that this law simply meant that only those manumitting the slave had any claim on the slave—there were no heirs who could make a claim against the slave’s freedom.⁸⁹ This law then was an additional guarantee for the manumitted slave.⁹⁰ Antōnios Babakos, after studying the Calymna inscriptions and the phrase “according to the laws of the manumitted,” asserts that these laws did not regulate the act of manumission but determined the duties of the freedperson after manumission.⁹¹ In studying all these inscriptions and the different laws they refer to, Zelnick-Abramovitz concludes that “giving freedom to one’s own slave was a private act and was at the discretion of the slave-owner; but once free, former slaves constituted a potential threat to the exclusiveness of the citizen body.”⁹² These laws then did not dictate how a slave was manumitted but determined the status and identification within the citizen body once he or she was set free. So, the inscriptions not only served to protect the freedom of the manumitted slave but aided the citizen body in identifying the newly acquired status of the freedperson.⁹³

88 Finley, “Greek Law,” 137; Francis Lyall, “Legal Metaphors in the Epistles,” *TynBul* 32 (1981): 83 and n4; Youni, “Greek Practice,” 315.

89 Cabanes and Drini, *Corpus des inscriptions grecques*, 259.

90 Ibid., 257–59.

91 Antōnios M. Babakos, “Familienrechtliche Verhältnisse auf der Insel Kalymnos im 1. Jahrhundert n. Chr.,” *zss* 81, no. 1 (1964): 37.

92 Zelnick-Abramovitz, “Freed Slaves, Their Status and State Control,” 307.

93 It is important to note that this status would vary according to the laws of the city in which the manumission took place.

1.3 *Cost of Manumission*

Having explored the different means of Greek manumission, it is important to consider what it cost the slave when the state or owner decided to offer him or her freedom. When the state offered a slave freedom, it involved calculated risk on the slave's part. When the owner offered a slave freedom, it usually involved significant monetary or other costs. Freedom was rarely given at no cost to the slave.

The state's offer of freedom required the slave to take some kind of risk. When the state offered a slave freedom in exchange for engaging in battle, a slave risked his life in order to gain his freedom. When a slave was offered freedom for testimony in court by the city of Athens, he or she also took risks. If the testimony was accepted, freedom was the prize. But in Athens, the powerless slave was testifying to and heard by the citizenry, most of whom likely owned slaves and who would have been uncomfortable with a slave testifying against a citizen, regardless of the charge.⁹⁴ How likely was it that the slave's testimony would be accepted? We should not overlook the risk the slave took, for if the court case did not end in a conviction, the slave could be put to death.⁹⁵ So, while the law allowed a slave to inform, the culture likely worked against such testimony being accepted.⁹⁶ The state, then, might offer freedom through military service or court testimony, but the slave risked his or her life in order to attain this freedom.

When an owner decided to offer a slave freedom, inscriptions indicate that slaves were often required to pay their owners money for their manumission. The fictive sales to a deity almost always include the price paid.⁹⁷ In the Delphi manumissions, the price ranges from one to twenty minae, with the average

94 As mentioned earlier, the charge would have involved behavior that would offend the gods and thus put the city at risk of incurring the gods' wrath (see page 20). Osborne explores this idea of Athens "inviting slaves to inform" and notes that "the solidarity of the citizen population in the face of slaves was very strong." Osborne, "Religion, Politics and Slave's Freedom," 89. See also Niall McKeown, "Resistance among Chattel Slaves in the Classical World," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, ed. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 159.

95 A. R. W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens: The Family and Property*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 171 and n1.

96 Plato seems to acknowledge this, for after discussing the reward for a slave reporting a parent who is maltreated, he states, "the magistrates shall take care that no one does injury to such a man in revenge for his giving information" (*Leg.* 932d [Bury]).

97 For example, an inscription from Delphi referenced earlier (see page 25), reads in part: "Polemarchos and Kleareta sold to the Pythian Apollo, a female slave, whose name is Athenais, for the price (τιμὴ) of five minae" (*FD* 3.6.121; 47–66 CE).

being four minae across the three centuries attested.⁹⁸ The prices in Aetolia are usually between three and six minae, with the average being four minae. In Arcarnia, there is one attestation of one minae. In Locris the prices are between one and ten minae (with a couple of outliers of 21 and 35 minae), with the average being four minae.⁹⁹ And in Thessaly the prices are between two and four minae.¹⁰⁰ We see then a range of release prices from as low as one minae to as high as thirty-five minae, with the average being four minae. The modes of manumission other than fictive sales rarely, if ever, mention the release price. Less than ten inscriptions across all locations, however, note that a slave was released *δωρεά* (*dōrea*), for free.¹⁰¹ This rare mention of a slave being released at no cost suggests that slaves usually paid a release price to their owners.¹⁰²

Just how costly was the average price of four minae to a slave in ancient Greece? Hopkins estimates that four minae would buy enough wheat to feed a poor family for three years.¹⁰³ By his estimates the price of manumission then seems almost unattainable for a slave. How did these slaves acquire the money necessary for their freedom? This is a difficult—if not impossible—question to answer, but a few observations can be made concerning these prices. One, to acquire these funds would most likely require extended time and great sacrifice. Second, there is evidence that some slaves had their freedom paid by

98 Calderini, *La manomissione*, 213–14. Duncan-Jones determines this to be the median average. Richard Duncan-Jones, “Problems of the Delphic Manumission Payments 200–1 B.C.,” *ZPE* 57 (1984): 205–206. Hopkins breaks the prices into full freedom and conditional release by gender and shows full freedom costing more on average (6 minae for men, 4.5 minae for women) than conditional release (3.9 minae for men, 3.7 minae for women). Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 161. Hopkins uses drachmae, with 1 minae = 100 drachmae (p. 160n46). Conditional release will be discussed below.

99 Prices in Aetolia, Arcarnia, and Locris were found through the study of the manumission inscriptions and searches done in *PHI*.

100 See Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 212.

101 Chaironeia *IG* VII 3332 (second/first c. BCE); Delphi *FD* 3.3.45 (ca. 50 BCE), *FD* 3.3.364 (undated); Magnesia *IG* IX(2) 117b (undated), *SEG* 37.457a (second/third c. CE); Azoros *IG* IX(2) 1296 IV (15–13 BCE), *IG* IX(2) 1299 (reign of Augustus), *SEG* 26.644 (18–17 BCE). Search was done through *PHI*. Six of these eight manumissions are types other than fictive sales—types which usually do not mention the release price.

102 See also Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 208 and n32. She notes that “most scholars believe that [payment of money for release] was the rule.” We see support for this in Strato’s will where he mentions remitting the release money (*ἀφίημι τὰ λύτρα*) of two different slaves who were already free (Diog. Laert., 5.72.9–10, 12–13).

103 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 146.

a third party¹⁰⁴ or through an *eranos* loan.¹⁰⁵ Third, the slaves who acquired manumission were a decided minority of slaves; as Hopkins concludes, “most slaves, we think, were never freed.”¹⁰⁶ To acquire these release funds then, slaves had to remain in slavery an extended amount of time in order to save the funds or had to have some persons interested and able to give or loan them the money to purchase their freedom. Regardless of the source of the funds, few would have been able to pay the high price required for their freedom.

In addition to the release price, slaves in many places were also required to pay a fee to the city. This fee is referenced in inscriptions found in Peloponnesian Orchomenos and the cities of Thessaly. An inscription from Larisa referred to earlier (see page 29) reads in part: “Those among the manumitted slaves who paid to the city what is due according to the law: ... Menon, declared to be manumitted by Menestratos son of Portinos the due fifteen staters to the city” (*SEG* 31.577; c.136/135 BCE).¹⁰⁷ Zelnick-Abramovitz argues that since the fee is always 22½ denarii (15 staters) in the Thessalian inscriptions, it is a registration or publication fee rather than a tax.¹⁰⁸ It makes sense that the fee, at least in part, covered the cost of the inscription, as someone had to pay for this rather expensive manner of recording the manumission.¹⁰⁹ Regardless of the purpose

104 There is speculation when examining inscriptions that men sometimes manumitted female slaves in order to marry them or that parents (whether slave or free) manumitted their children, although this is never clearly stated. See *ibid.*, 165–66, 169. The Greek literature speaks of a man freeing a prostitute to be his concubine (Dem. [*Olymp.*] 48.53) and of a man wanting to free his love interest who was a slave boy (Hyp. *Athen.* 5–6). See further Kamen, “Sale for the Purpose of Freedom.”

105 Finley explains that the *eranos* loan “was a friendly loan tendered by an *ad hoc* group (more properly, a plurality) of individuals; it was characterised not only by the fact of group participation but also by the absence of interest and by a provision for repayment over a period of years in regular installments.” M. I. Finley, Brent D. Shaw, and Richard P. Saller, *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (New York: Viking, 1982), 68. See Chaironeia IG VII 3376 (second c. BCE); Delphi *SGDI* 1754 (170–156 BCE), 1772 (170 BCE), 1791 (170 BCE), 1804 (171 BCE), 1878 (170–156 BCE), 1909 (177 BCE), 2317 (101–59 BCE). Search was done through *PHI*.

106 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 139. Scheidel comments that “we may suspect that particularly privileged and/or skilled slaves were disproportionately likely to be able to procure their own freedom.” Walter Scheidel, “Real Slave Prices and the Relative Cost of Slave Labor in the Greco-Roman World,” *AncSoc* 35 (2005): 9.

107 Translation by Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Taxing Freedom*, 34.

108 Zelnick-Abramovitz, “Freed Slaves, Their Status and State Control,” 306. She notes that the Roman manumission tax, as an example, was a percentage of the slave’s value and thus would not be a consistent price.

109 Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 201–203. She notes again that only a very few slaves could have afforded to record their manumission in such a manner (p. 207).

of the fee, it was exacted by the city involved and was often an additional cost slaves had to pay for their freedom.

Sometimes an owner would require a slave woman to provide a child in return for manumission. This type of requirement is attested in the Delphi and Calymna inscriptions. In Delphi, we read of female slaves being required to give young children (βρέφος), between one and three years old, to the manumitter's children¹¹⁰ or grandchildren.¹¹¹ In one inscription the slave woman is given the option of paying an additional two minae (having already paid three minae as the release price) or giving a one-year-old child.¹¹² Hopkins observes that at Delphi "the requirement to produce children for the former master gained momentum only in the first century AD."¹¹³ Therefore, it is perhaps significant that the manumission inscriptions in Calymna are all dated to the first century CE (14–54 CE), and the requirement for a slave woman to raise a child for the manumitter or the manumitter's children is much more common there.¹¹⁴ In some cases, the slave woman could provide a child or pay fifty denarii.¹¹⁵ If the age of the child to be provided is mentioned, it is always specified to be two years old;¹¹⁶ sometimes the child is required to be a male.¹¹⁷ The owner "was knowledgeable enough to wait until the child was weaned and the risks of mortality had diminished."¹¹⁸ These slave women¹¹⁹ then were not providing newborn infants but children whom they had raised for at least a year, if not

110 SEG 12.255 (first c. CE) ; FD 3.3.273 (undated), 3.3.291 (undated), 3.6.39 (20–46 CE), 3.6.43 (undated), 3.6.58 (20–46 CE).

111 FD 3.6.38 (20–46 CE).

112 FD 3.3.332 (undated).

113 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 156n39.

114 Samuel, following Segre in his examination of the Calymna inscriptions, posits that manumission at Calymna always required the provision of a child to the manumitter. Alan E. Samuel, "The Role of 'Paramone' Clauses in Ancient Documents," *JJP* 15 (1965): 292. Klaffenbach and Babakos dispute this conclusion. G. Klaffenbach, "Review: Marius Segre: *Tituli Calymnii*," *Gnomon* 25, no. 7 (1953): 459; Babakos, "Familienrechtliche Verhältnisse auf der Insel Kalymnos," 36–37. Of the fifty-four inscriptions that I examined, thirty-two explicitly mention the requirement of children, but the other twenty-two do not. The inscriptions that do not specify a requirement to provide a child give evidence that this was not always a requirement.

115 TC 171, 176, 179, 183, 184, 197. In TC 174, the slave could provide a child or pay sixty denarii. All inscriptions from Calymna are dated ca. 14–54 CE.

116 TC 156, 163, 200.

117 TC 155, 158, 174, 175, 176, 179, 183, 184, 187b.

118 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 156.

119 In Calymna, there are two inscriptions that indicate a male slave is required to provide a child (TC 171, 197).

three—time enough to become emotionally attached.¹²⁰ We do not know if the manumitted slave woman was allowed to remain in relationship with her child. There is no question, however, that the child would live as a slave and could suffer all the liabilities associated with slavery—including being physically abused, sexually used, and sold if the owner desired.

It is likely that when some slaves were manumitted, they left other children behind in slavery as well. In examining the Delphi inscriptions, Hopkins found that eighty percent “of the slaves freed as children were freed separately from their mothers.”¹²¹ Hopkins concludes that the price of freedom was so high that parents had to choose to free themselves first and “leave their children behind them in slavery, perhaps with the hope of buying them out later.”¹²²

In summary, the evidence is sparse for slaves receiving manumission at no cost to themselves. It is likely that most slaves were required to pay their manumitter a release price, and this price appears to be so high that most slaves could not have paid it. In addition, many cities required a fee that was likely used to register and publicize the manumission. Female slaves could be required to provide a child for the manumitter. They had to raise that child for at least a year, if not three, until the owner deemed such a life viable—and then leave the child to a life of slavery. It is likely that parents left other children behind in slavery also, only being able to raise enough funds to release themselves. The slaves in ancient Greece who achieved manumission, especially the women, did so at an extremely high cost.

120 Some argue that the high mortality rate for children in ancient Greece and Rome (estimated between thirty and fifty percent) diminished the emotional attachment of parents to their young children. See for example Keith R. Bradley, “Reviewed Work: Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History, Vol. 2,” *CP* 81, no. 3 (1986): 267; M. I. Finley, “The Elderly in Classical Antiquity,” *GR* 28, no. 2 (1981): 159; Robert Woods, “Ancient and Early Modern Mortality: Experience and Understanding,” *EcHR* 60, no. 2 (2007): 395. Even though mourning for very young children was discouraged and even disdained by some elite male writers (Cic., *Tusc.* 1.39; Plut., *Cons. ux.*; Sen., *Ep.* 99; Tac. *Ann.* 15.23), these same works provide evidence that people in the first century truly mourned the loss of young children. Woods concedes that for those children who did survive “there may have been an intense emotional attachment between parents and children.” *Ibid.*, 390. Carroll examines the mortuary evidence for children under one year of age in Italy from the first century BCE through 300 CE. She concludes that the high infant mortality rate did not make “people immune to grief or that they did not care when their children fell ill or died. Instead, the vulnerability of infants probably sharpened parental awareness of health threats and increased concern and anxiety for their babies.” Maureen Carroll, “Infant Death and Burial in Roman Italy,” *JRA* 24 (2011): 115.

121 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 165.

122 *Ibid.*

1.4 *Extent of Freedom*

When we in the twenty-first century read that a Greek slave was set free, the assumption is likely that the slave was released from all obligation to and exploitation by his or her former owner, and that the slave could now live wherever he or she desired and begin life as a free person. Our sources, however, reveal a different picture.

To begin, a freed slave was never called a free person, ἐλεύθερος (*eleutheros*), but rather a freedperson, ἀπελεύθερος (*apeleutheros*).¹²³ That the Greeks had terminology distinguishing freeborn persons from freedpersons is significant, for it allowed them to set freedpersons apart both legally and socially.¹²⁴ In most Greek city-states, freedpersons could not become citizens,¹²⁵ and as non-citizens they could not vote or hold office and could not own land.¹²⁶ In Athens, they could not marry an Athenian citizen,¹²⁷ and they had to pay the μετοίκιον (*metoikion*), a tax paid by resident non-citizens (metics).¹²⁸ Freedpersons experienced additional disadvantages. A metic had to register a citizen as a προστάτης (*prostatēs*) to represent them legally, but they were free to choose their *prostatēs*.¹²⁹ A freedperson, however, was required to register their former owner as their *prostatēs*.¹³⁰ This action established an ongoing relationship whether the freedperson desired it or not. In addition, there is some evidence that freedpersons paid a tax of three obols in addition to the

¹²³ Or less commonly, an ἐξελεύθερος (*exeleutheros*). Zelnick-Abramovitz argues that these two words differentiated statuses of freedpersons: an *apeleutheros* was “a freed person who was still considered as belonging to another,” while an *exeleutheros* was “a freed person who had no further obligations towards his or her former master.” Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 344. Meyer disagrees with her morphological argument. Meyer, *Metics and the Athenian Phialai-Inscriptions*, 55n154. Harrison suggests that an *exeleutheros* was a freedperson “who had originally been free, had fallen into slavery, and then been manumitted, and also the sons of manumitted slaves.” Harrison, *The Law of Athens*, 181. I do not think there is enough evidence to determine the difference in meaning between two terms, and all agree that while there must have been a difference in meaning, the distinction was not always strictly maintained.

¹²⁴ Not all societies made this distinction. Westermann notes that “there is no precise word, in fact, for ‘manumission’ or for ‘freedman’ in the ancient Semitic languages.” Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity*, 43.

¹²⁵ A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City: From Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940), 160; Youni, “Greek Practice,” 313. For the somewhat rare exceptions to this practice, see Zelnick-Abramovitz, “Freed Slaves, Their Status and State Control,” 309–312.

¹²⁶ Harrison, *The Law of Athens*, 184.

¹²⁷ Dem., [Neaer.] 59.16.

¹²⁸ Harp., s.v. μετοίκιον. Harrison, *The Law of Athens*, 185, 187.

¹²⁹ Harp., s.v. ἀπροστασίον.

¹³⁰ Harp., s.v. ἀποστασίον. Harrison, *The Law of Athens*, 184–85, 190.

metoikion.¹³¹ Finally, if a freedperson died childless, their former owner inherited their estate.¹³² Thus from a legal perspective, a freedperson never achieved the same status as a freeborn person.

Freedpersons also suffered social disadvantages. While they were no longer slaves, they were often still viewed as servile due to their past. For some freedpersons, their time in slavery had marked them with permanent scars, brands, or tattoos for all to see—difficult if not impossible to remove.¹³³ Freedpersons marked in such a way would always be immediately recognized as former slaves—if not mistaken for current ones.¹³⁴ But even those who did not have physical marks of their former slavery could not completely distance themselves from their servile past. Attic oratory is known for what Kamen calls “servile invective,” a type of character assassination used against freedpersons in the courtroom.¹³⁵ For example, Apollodorus refers to Phormio as a slave throughout one of his courtroom speeches in spite of the fact that Phormio had been manumitted by Apollodorus’s father (Dem., 1 *Steph.* 75, 84, 86). Although Phormio was not only a wealthy freedperson but also a citizen (Dem.,

131 Harp., s.v. μετοίκιον. Ibid., 184–85; Deborah Kamen, *Status in Classical Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 44. Both Harrison and Kamen point out that while the tax itself was small, the impact of being set apart as one who had to pay it was likely psychologically significant. The tax, however, is questioned as being unique to freedpersons because Pollux (*Onom.* 3.55) records that metics also paid this tax. Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 308–309.

132 Harrison, *The Law of Athens*, 186. An inscription from Locris in Central Greece forbids the manumitted slave from having or adopting children (IG IX 1(2) 3.624d; ca. mid-second c. BCE). Zelnick-Abramovitz suggests that the manumitter intended to inherit the freedperson’s estate. Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 231. An inscription from Delphi specifically states that if the manumitted slave dies childless, her property goes to her manumitter (SGDI II 2097; ca. 140–100 BCE).

133 The Greek philosopher Bion of Borysthenes (ca. 325–ca. 255 BCE) described his father as a freedman “with no face to show, but only the writing on his face, a token of his master’s severity” (Diog. Laert., 4.46 [Hicks]). Kamen explains that tattoos and brands were “almost always placed on the enslaved person’s face—ensuring both the marks’ complete visibility and the marked person’s recognizability as slave.” Deborah Kamen, “A Corpus of Inscriptions: Representing Slave Marks in Antiquity,” *MAAR* 55 (2010): 99. She goes on to relate the different ways slaves and freedpersons attempted to remove or disguise these marks of slavery (pp. 104–107).

134 Freedpersons with markings might have been the exception. Slaves who were set free were not likely those who had run away or had been branded. But it is difficult to know how many would have been marked (by brand or tattoo) as war captives or beaten and thus had scars that evidenced their enslavement in that manner. See Kamen’s article for more detail on the reasons for slave markings. Ibid.

135 Deborah Kamen, “Servile Invective in Classical Athens,” *SCI* 28 (2009): 43.

[2 *Steph.*] 13),¹³⁶ “he was always, in some sense, the slave of Apollodorus’s father.”¹³⁷ Manumission allowed for movement between statuses and this made the Greeks uncomfortable, and so those who made this transition were often reminded of their servile past.¹³⁸ While there was a legal distinction between being an *apeleutheros* and being an *eleutheros*, the social distinction was perhaps even greater.

The inscriptions often included a protection clause which indicates that the freedom of manumitted slaves could be insecure. The following clause is found in almost two-thirds of the inscriptions from Delphi: “But if anyone should seize [the freed slave] for the purpose of enslavement, let the sellers and guarantor confirm the contract which was entrusted to the god” (*FD* 3.6.121).¹³⁹ Many of these inscriptions also include the next clause which reads, “Likewise, let those who are near have the authority to rescue and remove to freedom the aforementioned slave without penalty and free from all legal action or penalties.”¹⁴⁰ We see this take place in the case of Neaera, which was mentioned earlier. At some point after her manumission, she moved to Athens with Stephanus, and Phrynion went to the house and tried to carry her away. But Stephanus “took her away from him, as the law allowed, declaring her to be a free woman” (Dem., [*Neaer.*] 59.40 [Murray]). There is evidence then, by this case and by the presence of the protection clauses in the inscriptions, that freedpersons could have their status challenged. The freedperson then would obviously need to be near the location of the inscription or near people who could verify and vouch for their freedom. If a freedperson wanted to move elsewhere, they apparently took the risk of being unable to prove their status.¹⁴¹ One enigma, however, that scholars have begun to note is the distribution of the Greek manumission inscriptions: they are not found in the large cities such as Athens, Corinth, or Ephesus but rather in areas of smaller populations where people would know each other. Therefore, the need to publicize the freedperson’s status change for the purpose of protecting the manumitted slave’s freedom would seem

136 Here we see the Greeks could confer citizenship on freedpersons.

137 Kamen, *Status in Classical Athens*, 54.

138 Kamen, “Servile Invective in Classical Athens,” 55.

139 A search in *PHI* indicates this phrase, or one closely related, occurs in 671 of the approximately 1000 Delphi manumission inscriptions.

140 This phrase occurs in over 400 of the Delphi manumission inscriptions. Similar protection clauses are found in inscriptions from Phokis in central Greece.

141 Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 266.

unnecessary.¹⁴² This distribution pattern raises new questions about the purpose of the inscriptions.

It was the relationship, however, between the freedperson and his or her former owner which had the most impact on the extent of the manumitted slave's freedom. It appears that some slaves, when they were manumitted, were set completely free from any obligation to their former master. Most slaves at Delphi, about seventy percent, were set free without further obligations.¹⁴³ One inscription reads in part, "let Hella have authority to do whatever she wishes and go wherever she wishes" (*FD* 3.1.310; ca. 90 BCE). An inscription from Bouthrotos in northern Greece makes it clear that the slave's freedom began on the day of manumission: the owners "set free and dedicate Moschina to Asclepios ... from this day so that she may go wherever she wants" (*I.Bouthrotos* 99; after 163 BCE). Slaves set free in wills often had no further obligations.¹⁴⁴

Many manumissions, however, did require further obligations from the slave. Inscriptions that include such obligations are found in all geographical areas and among all modes of manumission. Some slaves manumitted at Delphi were given the task of providing the manumitter a proper burial¹⁴⁵ or maintaining the grave site.¹⁴⁶ In the Bosphorus region, the slave was not obligated to the manumitter but was required to give respect and service to the prayerhouse.¹⁴⁷ The most common obligation, however, was to remain with the manumitter or another designated person,¹⁴⁸ usually for the lifetime of that person; sometimes, however, a specified time period was given.¹⁴⁹ An inscription from Delphi reads in part:

142 Lewis, "Slavery and Manumission"; Kostas Vlassopoulos, "Taxing Freedom in Thessalian Manumission Inscriptions (Book Review)," *BMCRev* 2014.08.35.

143 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 140.

144 *IG* V(2), 274,1; *IG* IX(2) 118b; *IG* XI(2) 546; *SGDI* II 2101; Plato (Diog. Laert., 3.42.9–10), Strato (Diog. Laert., 5.63.10–12), and Epicurus (Diog. Laert., 10.21.8–10).

145 For example, *FD* 3.2.172 (ca. 129 BCE), *FD* 3.3.269 (49/8 BCE), *FD* 3.3.364 (undated), *IG* IX(1) 42 (200–150 BCE), *SGDI* II 1796 (174 BE).

146 *SGDI* II 1775 (170–156 BCE), *SGDI* II 1807 (175/174 BCE), *TC* 187b (ca. 14–54 CE).

147 *CIRB* 70 (81 CE); *CIRB* 71 (first c. CE); *CIRB* 73 (ca. 100–150 CE); *CIRB* 985 (16 CE); *SEG* 43.510 (51 CE). In Lebadeia, a slave was required to serve at the sacrifices to the gods to whom he was dedicated (*IG* VII 3083; early second c. BCE).

148 In Chaironeia for example, a female slave is required to remain with the manumitter's mother as long as she lives (*IG* VII 3363; mid/late second c. BCE); see also *TC* 168 (ca. 14–54 CE). In Delphi, a female slave is required to remain with her manumitter as long as they live; and when the manumitter dies, the slave is to remain with the manumitter's son for six more years (*SGDI* II 1742; 170/169 BCE).

149 Two years (*SGDI* II 1984; 193/192 BCE); five years (*I.Bouthrotos* 126; after 163 BCE); eight years (*SGDI* II 1702; 170–156 BCE); ten years (*I.Bouthrotos* 104; after 163 BCE). In the

Polemarchos and Kleareta sold to the Pythian Apollo, a female slave, whose name is Athenais ... on condition that she is to be free and not be claimed as a slave by anyone for all time, never belonging to anyone in any way.... Athenais must remain with (παραμεινάτω) Kleareta and Polemarchos during their lifetime, doing all that is commanded. (*FD* 3.6.121; 47–66 CE)

Due to the use of the Greek verb παραμένω in these manumissions, scholars refer to these particular obligations as *paramone*. If the slaves did not perform these *paramone* obligations, they could suffer punishment including being sold¹⁵⁰ or having their contract for freedom revoked.¹⁵¹

Understanding these *paramone* obligations in relation to freedom has proven difficult and raises challenging questions. Is the slave set free, as one phrase seems to indicate (“she is to be free”), or is the slave’s freedom yet future, as another phrase seems to imply (“Athenais must remain ... doing all that is commanded”)? How can a person who has been set free continue to be punished like a slave, including being sold? How genuine is a freedom that can be revoked? Scholars have answered these questions in a variety of ways. Some argue that the slave was not free until the *paramone* was completed.¹⁵² Others, using a legal lens, argue the opposite: the slave was completely free and had entered into a work contract with his or her former owner.¹⁵³ Most scholars, however, assert that while the slave was legally free, his or her social obligations remained essentially the same; thus, these slaves were in a liminal state between, or on both sides of, slavery and freedom.¹⁵⁴ These scholars call manumission with *paramone* conditional release or deferred manumission.

philosophers’ wills a time frame was sometimes mentioned: 4 years (Diog. Laert., 5.55) 2 and 4 years (Diog. Laert., 5.73–74).

150 Usually, the manumitter reserved the right to punish the slave in whatever manner they wished (ἐξουσίαν ἐχέτωσαν ἐπιτιμέοντες τρόπον ᾧ κα θέλωντι). See for example *FD* 3.3.313, *FD* 3.3.140, *FD* 3.3.269. One manumitter specified that they could chain, beat, and sell the slave (*FD* 3.3.329). Several mention that they could punish in whatever way they wished except they could not sell the slave (*FD* 3.3.32, *FD* 3.3.346, *FD* 3.3.364), perhaps indicating that selling the slave was usually allowed.

151 See for example *SGDI* II 1702 (170–156 BCE), *IG* IX 1(2) 2.394 (second c. BCE), *IG* IX 1(2) 3.624d (second c. BCE).

152 Bloch, “Die Freilassungsbedingungen,” 26–27; Sosin, “Manumission with Paramone,” 378.

153 Samuel, “The Role of Paramone Clauses,” 294–95; William L. Westermann, “Slavery and the Elements of Freedom in Ancient Greece,” in *Slavery in Classical Antiquity: Views and Controversies*, ed. M. I. Finley (Cambridge: W. Heffer, 1960), 28–29.

154 Calderini, *La manomissione*, 286; M. I. Finley, “Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?” *Historia* 8, no. 2 (1959): 147; Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 133; Kamen, *Status*

There is much about these manumissions with *paramone* that is difficult and at times contradictory. No single position explains the data without running into what appears to be exceptions. Joshua Sosin in a 2015 article, however, has challenged the scholarly consensus of conditional release by reintroducing the argument that manumission did not take place until after *paramone* was completed. As he states it, “First service, then freedom.”¹⁵⁵ In some Delphi inscriptions and in the inscriptions from Boeotia an aorist participial form of παραμένω is used. We read for example that three slaves were sold “on the condition that they be free (ἐφ’ ὧν τε ἐλευθέρους εἶμεν) and untouchable by all for all their lives, after they have remained (παραμείναντας)” with their manumitter as long as he lives (*SGDI* II 1715; 170–156 BCE). In most Delphi inscriptions, however, we find an aorist imperative rather than the participle. Sosin notes that the “two formulas co-occur at Bouthrotos as well, with no indication of different meanings.”¹⁵⁶ The aorist participle is not the only indicator of time sequence in these inscriptions. Some inscriptions indicate that the slave receives freedom when the manumitter dies: “Agathocules was sold ... on the condition that he be free and untouchable by all for all time. Agathocules must remain with [his manumitter] for the whole time that [his manumitter] lives.... But when [his manumitter] dies (ἐπεὶ δὲ κά τι πάθῃ ἀνθρώπινον) ... let him be free (ἔστω ἐλεύθερος)” (*FD* 3.1.303; first c. CE).¹⁵⁷ In addition, Sosin points out that the philosophers’ wills also show the time sequence of after *paramone*, then freedom. Theophrastus, as mentioned earlier, states that he will give two slaves “their freedom (ἀφίημι ἐλευθέρους) after they have remained (παραμείναντας) four years in the garden and worked there together and their conduct has been free from blame” (Diog. Laert., 5.55.3–5).¹⁵⁸

There are other elements in these manumission inscriptions that support the idea that the slave was not free until after *paramone* was completed. First,

in *Classical Athens*, 42; Youni, “Greek Practice,” 321; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 245.

155 Sosin, “Manumission with Paramone,” 350.

156 Ibid., 335. Zanovello challenges Sosin by asserting that the aorist participle occurs rarely in these inscriptions where “in most cases the inscriptions express the duty to παραμένειν with the aorist imperative, which has no temporal meaning but only an aspectual value.” Sara L. Zanovello, “From Slave to Free: A Legal Perspective on Greek Manumission” (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 2017), 64n192. Sosin does not address this difference. Actual language usage, however, does not always follow strict grammar rules, and context (here, the parallel usage) does need to have a bearing on how we understand words and phrases.

157 A search in *PHI* of the Delphi inscriptions found over 65 inscriptions with this stipulation.

158 In another example, Lyco stipulates in his will that “Agathon, after he has remained (παραμείναντα) two years, should be set free (ἀφείσθαι ἐλευθέρων), and the litter-bearers Ophelio and Posidonius after remaining (παραμείναντας) four years” (Diog. Laert., 5.73.11–74.2).

the slave in *paramone* did not gain protection from physical punishment. If the slave did not remain in *paramone*, they could be punished in whatever manner the manumitter chose, including physical punishment.¹⁵⁹ Demosthenes stated to a jury that the biggest difference between a slave and a free person “is that the body of a slave is made responsible for all his misdeeds, whereas corporal punishment is the last penalty to inflict on a free man” (*Timocr.* 167 [Vince]). That a person in *paramone* could be physically punished lends credence to the argument that he or she is still a slave.

Second, such a person did not gain release from the liability of being sold during *paramone*. About thirty inscriptions do state that the manumitter could not sell the slave if he or she did not perform *paramone*,¹⁶⁰ while a few state that the slave could be sold.¹⁶¹ For the majority of manumissions that include *paramone*, however, no exception about selling the slave is made, so it seems likely that selling the slave is allowed under the umbrella statement of punishing the slave in whatever manner the manumitter desires. But the question arises: if the manumitter still fully possesses the slave during *paramone*, why would there be any need to specify that he or she could punish or sell the slave? Such actions would be within the normal purview of slave ownership. Sosin points to the sale or consecration of the slave to a god: it is the god, not the manumitter, who “owns” the slave during *paramone* in these types of manumissions, so these stipulations have to be included in the manumission document.¹⁶²

Third, a slave could have the manumission contract invalidated if he or she did not complete *paramone*. Again, this makes sense if the slave is performing *paramone* as a slave and not a freedperson: ownership is simply transferred from the god back to the manumitter, and the promise of manumission is cancelled.¹⁶³ It is the *promise* of freedom that is revoked; not freedom itself, for it had not yet been achieved.¹⁶⁴ While the scholarly consensus argues that a

159 See footnote 150.

160 For example, *FD* 3.3.32, *FD* 3.3.346, *FD* 3.3.364.

161 *FD* 3.3.175, *FD* 3.3.329, *FD* 3.3.337.

162 Sosin, “Manumission with Paramone,” 333. In my research, these penalties for not performing *paramone* (being punished or sold) only occur in fictive sales or fictive consecrations, thus lending support for Sosin’s argument.

163 *Ibid.*, 338. Here too, this clause indicating that the contract (ὥνά) could be invalidated only occurs in fictive sales or fictive consecrations. The one exception appears to be a manumission from Macedonia that does not indicate the mode of manumission (*SEG* 12.314; 239–229 BCE); it does not reference a contract but states “let their freedom be invalid.”

164 In the Greek literature we see slaves promised freedom (*Livy* 21.45.7–8), promises of freedom being slow to come (*Livy* 24.14.3–4) and promises of freedom broken (*Plaut., Merc.* 153–54; *Poen.* 129–37, 359–63; *Tac., Ann.* 14.42).

slave under *paramone* was set free into a type of liminal freedom, the inscriptions considered alongside testamentary manumissions and the Greek literary sources seem to indicate that a slave under *paramone* was still a slave—freedom was not attained until the completion of *paramone*.

Apart from the *paramone* obligations, there is some evidence in Calymna and Athens that freedpersons may have had an ongoing relationship with their manumitters. In Calymna, where there were “the laws of the manumitted (κατὰ τοὺς ἀπελευθερωτικούς νόμους),” some manumitted slaves were said to be no one’s freedperson,¹⁶⁵ while other slaves were to be only the manumitter’s freedperson¹⁶⁶ or only the manumitter’s children’s freedperson.¹⁶⁷ A few slaves were released from “the laws of the manumitted.”¹⁶⁸ As discussed earlier, Babakos asserts that these laws determined the duties of the freedperson after manumission.¹⁶⁹ Thus, in Calymna, it appears that freedpersons had some kind of continuing relationships and duties to their manumitters unless specifically stated otherwise in the manumission document. What exactly those relationships and duties were is unknown.¹⁷⁰ Plato, in the laws for his ideal city, stipulates that a freedperson could be arrested for failing to properly attend to his or her manumitter: “Such service shall consist in the coming of the freedman three times a month to the home of the one who freed him, and undertake to do those duties which are both right and feasible” (*Leg.* 915a5–7). Plato goes on to say, however, that a freedperson, after being manumitted, could not remain in Greece more than twenty years (*Leg.* 915b2–4). The challenge of Plato’s laws is determining how closely they reflected the laws of Athens.¹⁷¹ It is important to note that in both these cases, these were duties expected from freedpersons and were not called *paramone*.

There is also evidence from Athens in the philosophers’ wills that freedpersons may have had an ongoing relationship with their manumitters. Theophrastus acknowledges two persons who have “long been free and provided me much service” (*Diog. Laert.*, 54.7–9). Lyco, in his will, mentions three persons who have already been manumitted. He appears to remit the release price (ἀφίημι τὰ λύτρα) for two of them and bequeaths to all of them money and

165 TC 153, 156, 157, 164a, 172, 176a, 187a, 192a, 205 (all inscriptions from Calymna are dated ca. 14–54 CE).

166 TC 170, 181.

167 TC 171, 177.

168 TC 168, 184, 201.

169 Babakos, “Familienrechtliche Verhältnisse auf der Insel Kalymnos,” 37.

170 Contra Babakos who argues that they included payment for manumission, *paramone* for the life of the manumitter, and that the manumitter be the freedperson’s *prostates*. *Ibid.*, 34–35.

171 Glenn R. Morrow, *Plato’s Law of Slavery in Its Relation to Greek Law*, ISLL 25, no 3 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1939), 101–110.

some household goods “for properly performing their appointed tasks” (Diog. Laert., 5.72–74). In neither will is it clear when the service being acknowledged took place—before or after manumission—but the context seems to indicate it was service provided as freedpersons. And if these freedpersons benefited from the wills, they must not have moved far away from their manumitter. It is only in Calymna and Athens then that we have evidence that some freedpersons had ongoing obligations to their manumitters.¹⁷²

While many freedpersons, therefore, had no further obligation to their former owners, one has to wonder how many of them still remained nearby because they had a “spouse” or children still held as slaves by the same owner.¹⁷³ As noted earlier, when Hopkins examined the Delphi inscriptions, he found that eighty percent “of the slaves freed as children were freed separately from their mothers.”¹⁷⁴ Thus, it is likely that these freedpersons were limited in how far they were willing to move away from such family members. It is also likely that the former owners were empowered to continue exploiting these freedpersons since they knew these freed slaves hoped to purchase other family members’ freedom.

In summary, a slave who was set free under Greek manumission was no longer owned by another person(s). The Delphi inscriptions often included the phrase that the slave could “do whatever or go wherever he or she wished.”¹⁷⁵ Freedpersons could legally marry and have legitimate children. While they could not own land (at least in Athens), they could own other property.¹⁷⁶

As we have seen, however, freedpersons suffered a number of liabilities and disadvantages. Most freedpersons could not become citizens, thus they could not vote or hold office. They were required to register their former owner as their *prostatēs*. It is possible that freedpersons paid a tax of three obols in addition to the *metoikion*. If a freedperson died childless, their former owner inherited their estate. In Calymna, unless released from the laws of the manumitted, a freedperson remained in some kind of relationship with his or her

172 Contra the scholars who understand *paramone* to be performed by freedpersons under conditional release rather than persons remaining in slavery.

173 I have placed the word spouse in quotes because Greek slaves had no legal capacity and therefore could not enter into legal marriages. See Youni, “Greek Practice,” 316, 321.

174 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 165.

175 Some slaves had restrictions, however, such as being required to live in a certain area (*SGDI* II 2085; 175/174 BCE) or to support biological parents (*SGDI* II 1708; 170–156 BCE). In Neaera’s case, she could not live and work in Corinth (Dem., [*Neaer.*] 59.30–32). See Sosin, “Manumission with Paramone,” 343–45.

176 Youni, “Greek Practice,” 321. A few slaves even inherited their owner(s)’s property upon the owner(s)’s death. For example, *FD* 3.2.172 (ca. 129 BCE); *FD* 3.3.24 (ca. 146 BCE); *FD* 3.3.27 (ca. 139 BCE); *SGDI* II 2069 (193 BCE).

manumitter. Such a relationship may have existed in Athens as well. The duties of *paramone*, however, did not indicate an ongoing relationship between the freedperson and the manumitter because these duties were performed by slaves prior to manumission, not by freedpersons. Socially, regardless of their achievements or wealth, they were often viewed as servile due to their past. Their freedom was apparently fragile as there is evidence that they could have their status challenged. It is likely then that the freedperson would need to be near the location of the inscription or near people who could verify their freedom; thus, if a freedperson wanted to move elsewhere, they apparently took the risk of being unable to prove their status. So, while they may have legally been able to travel and live where they wished, to do so may have incurred real risk to their freedom. And if they left “spouses” or children behind in slavery, they may have chosen not to move away from them.

1.5 *Benefits of Manumission*

Given the almost impossibly high cost to achieve a circumscribed and sometimes distant freedom, it is worth asking why a slave would pay such a steep price for manumission—what exactly did he or she gain in doing so? Why did they work so long and hard to acquire the necessary funds? Why would they pay money in some cases only to remain in slavery until their owners died? What would motivate a mother (or sometimes a father) to raise a child for several years only to leave that child to a life of slavery so that they, the parent, could achieve freedom? These are important questions because the answers begin to reveal the deep exploitation involved in the institution of slavery.

What did slaves gain upon manumission? We have already identified many of the benefits such as release from being owned by another person, freedom from bodily punishment, the opportunity to have a legal marriage and legitimate children, and the ability to own property and benefit from it personally. None of these is inconsequential or unworthy of pursuit. In particular, being able to establish and maintain a family, one that cannot be forcibly separated or individually exploited, likely explains why slaves left other family members in slavery: not to desert them but in hopes of being able to someday raise the funds to release them also. Being free was their best opportunity to be able to do so.¹⁷⁷

177 Hopkins, after studying the Delphi manumissions, comments that “many ex-slave parents succeeded in securing their children’s full or partial freedom only by the successive manumission of family members (father, then mother, then child). It must have taken years of struggle.” Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 166.

What slavery fundamentally destroys, however, is human dignity. To suggest that the ancient Greeks had a concept of human dignity is to risk anachronism. The modern concept of human dignity is “associated with worth and is said to be inherent.”¹⁷⁸ There is no Greek word(s) for human dignity. Honor was the predominant value of Greece and Rome, and it was not an inherent value, but rather something that could be ascribed, achieved, and lost.¹⁷⁹ Bruce Malina defines honor as “a claim to worth *and* the social acknowledgment of that worth.”¹⁸⁰ So we find that both human dignity and honor involve the idea of worth; the difference between the two ideas is the former considers worth inherent where the latter does not.

Slaves had no honor to gain or lose.¹⁸¹ The plays of Aristophanes reflect this lack of honor that slaves experienced: “The great majority of his slave-girls are described as stupid, the men are boorish; good and trustworthy slaves are overwhelmingly outnumbered by the vast crowd of their lazy, insolent, randy, cowardly, thieving and dishonest companions.”¹⁸² In addition, slaves were often animalized.¹⁸³ One of the Greek words for slave was ἀνδράποδον (*andrapodon*), similar to a word for animals, τετράποδον (*tetrapodon*). Aristotle states that “slaves and animals (ἀνδραπόδοις καὶ τοῖς θηρίοις) have little common responsibility and act for the most part at random” (*Metaph.* 1075a20–23 [Tredennick]). Xenophon argues that “in dealing with slaves the training considered suitable for wild animals is also a very effective way of teaching obedience, for you will get a lot out of them by filling their stomachs with the food they hanker for”

178 Oliver Sensen, “Human Dignity in Historical Perspective: The Contemporary and Traditional Paradigms,” *EJPT* 10, no. 1 (2011): 75.

179 Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed., revised and expanded (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 32–33.

180 *Ibid.*, 31, emphasis his.

181 Patterson notes that “the slave ... could have no honor because he had no power and no independent social existence, hence no public worth.” Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 10. Glancy explains that “honorable people guard their honor by protecting their persons from both physical and symbolic affronts.” A slave, however, was “unable to guard her or his body from insult or violation.” Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 27, 28.

182 Joseph Vogt, *Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man*, trans. Thomas Wiedemann (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 7–8. Vogt goes on to say that “when one surveys Aristophanes’s earlier works, one has to admit quite simply that in these comedies slaves are not accepted as full human beings” (p. 9).

183 For an exploration of this concept see David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation* (New York: Knopf, 2014), 15–44; Keith R. Bradley, “Animalizing the Slave: The Truth of Fiction,” *JRS* 90 (2000).

(*Oec.* 13.9 [Marchant]).¹⁸⁴ These attitudes and the absolute power an owner had to beat, sell, or even kill his or her slave led to the dehumanization of the slave.¹⁸⁵ Davis explains dehumanization as “the eradication not of human *identity* but of those elements of humanity that evoke respect and empathy and convey a sense of dignity.”¹⁸⁶ So when slaves were manumitted, they became persons who had the potential to gain honor and to be socially recognized as a person with honor. Perhaps what motivated these slaves to pay such a tremendous cost for their freedom was this significant benefit of manumission—becoming persons of honor and worth. In short, it restored their human dignity.

1.6 *Evidence That Greek Manumission Took Place during the Roman Empire*

A slave set free under Greek manumission could experience a different degree of freedom than one set free under Roman manumission. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, it is important to establish that these two different types of manumission were both taking place during the first century CE.

We have no evidence of public manumissions continuing after Rome conquered Greece and the surrounding areas. The manumissions offered for battle purposes would no doubt have ceased. It is not known if Athens continued offering slaves freedom for testimony in cases of sacrilege.

We do have evidence, however, of private manumissions continuing to take place after Rome conquered Greece and Asia Minor. Many Greek manumission inscriptions are dated to the first century CE and even much later. Several inscriptions from the Peloponnese are dated in this timeframe.¹⁸⁷ The Delphi inscriptions date from the second century BCE to the first century CE.¹⁸⁸ With

184 As referenced in Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 66. De Wet argues that Aristotle and Xenophon had two different understandings of slavery: “Whereas Aristotle promoted the theory of natural slavery, Xenophon’s theory of slaveholding was based on alterizing (or othering) rather than naturalizing discourses.” Chris L. de Wet, *Preaching Bondage: John Chrysostom and the Discourse of Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 29. Nonetheless, they both animalized slaves.

185 See also Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 117–18. Bradley comments that “animalization ... served to sanction and to justify the way masters treated their slaves, in the sense that once slaves were set on the level of beasts all need to cater to their human sensibilities was removed.” Bradley, “Animalizing the Slave,” 118.

186 Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation*, 17, emphasis his.

187 *IG* V,2 274 (102 BCE–16 CE); *IG* V,2 275 (second/third c. CE); *IG* V,2 277 (after 130 CE); *IG* V,2 342a (first/second c. CE); *IG* V,2 345 (79/78 BCE).

188 According to Hopkins, 113 slaves were manumitted at Delphi in the first century CE. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 140.

the exception of Thessaly, inscriptions from other areas of central Greece are predominantly from before the turn of the era, but there are scattered inscriptions from the first century and later.¹⁸⁹ The inscriptions from Thessaly range from the second century BCE to the third century CE.¹⁹⁰ The manumissions associated with the Jewish synagogue in the Bosporan region date from the first through third century CE. On Calymna, the inscriptions are all from the first century CE.

But do we know under what law system the manumissions represented by these inscriptions took place? Rome divided her territory into provinces. In these provinces, three levels of law existed: Roman law which fully applied only to Roman citizens, local law which applied to non-citizens, and provincial law, *ius provinciale*, which applied to everyone in the province, citizens and non-citizens alike.¹⁹¹ But even within a province, different types of cities had different relationships to the Roman law. Roman colonies were required to adopt Roman law for their community.¹⁹² Free cities (*liberae civitates*) were granted the right through treaty or senatorial decree to govern by their own local law.¹⁹³ Rome preferred to interfere as little as possible, so if the other communities managed their affairs well, kept the peace, and paid their taxes, they were also allowed to maintain their own local laws.¹⁹⁴

In regard to manumissions, the inscriptions show little to no influence of Roman law.¹⁹⁵ The Delphi manumission inscriptions show no change in form

189 Amphissa: *IG IX,12* 3.721 (1–50 CE); Hyampolis: *IG IX,1* 86 (98–117 CE); Thisbe: *AD 2* (1916) 262,1 (second c. CE); *AD 2* (1916) 262,2 (second/third c. CE).

190 Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Taxing Freedom*, 29.

191 Youni, "Greek Practice," 335–36.

192 Mason Hammond, "Res olim dissociabiles: Principatus ac Libertas: Liberty under the Early Roman Empire," *HSCP* 67 (1963): 53.

193 Andrew Lintott, *Imperium Romanum: Politics and Administration* (London: Routledge, 1993), 154; David Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor: To the End of the Third Century after Christ*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 156; G. H. Stevenson, *Roman Provincial Administration till the Age of the Antonines* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939), 82.

194 P. A. Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 272; Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 39; Jones, *The Greek City*, 171; Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 154; Stevenson, *Roman Provincial Administration*, 121; Greg Woolf, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East," *PCPhS*, no. 40 (1994): 123. There was one other type of community found in provinces called a *municipium*, but this type was found primarily in Italy, not the Greek east. Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 27; Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 130.

195 Gibson, *Jewish Manumission Inscriptions*, 33.

over time nor do the Thessalian inscriptions, save for the reference to price (denarii instead of staters in some cases).¹⁹⁶ In her research, Youni found that

for almost four hundred years until 212, Macedonians lawfully continued to contract their marriages, to inherit and bequeath, to sell and buy, or to manumit their slaves as they had done under the kings, applying laws and practices, which could be substantially different from their Roman equivalents.¹⁹⁷

So we see that there is evidence that Greek law, in all its variety, continued to function alongside Roman law during the time of the first century. It is important to emphasize that Roman law did not apply to all those in the empire—only a Roman citizen enjoyed the full protection and privileges of the Roman government. A slave who was manumitted formally by a Roman citizen gained the coveted right of Roman citizenship, regardless of where he or she lived in the Roman empire. However, a slave of a non-citizen or a slave freed informally, even one who lived in Rome itself, did not attain this status. It was not until 212 CE that citizenship was granted to all free persons in the Roman empire, so “it follows that Roman law was rarely applicable in the Greek East.”¹⁹⁸ Therefore, since Greek law continued to function alongside Roman law during the first century, it was possible for both Greek and Roman manumissions to take place during this time.

1.7 *Summary: The Circumscribed Freedom of a Greek Freedperson*

A slave who was freed under the Greek manumission system could be freed by the state or by his or her owner. The state freed slaves for participation in war or as a reward for their testimony in particular court cases. In these situations, freedom was immediate with no financial cost to the manumitted slave, although the risk to their life should not be underestimated or easily dismissed.¹⁹⁹ An owner could free a slave by testament, public proclamation, fictive sale, fictive consecration, or simple declaration. What evidence we have indicates that

196 J. A. O. Larsen, “Roman Greece,” in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, ed. Tenney Frank, vol. 4 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1938), 456n21; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Taxing Freedom*, 121.

197 Youni, “Greek Practice,” 336.

198 A. H. M. Jones, “The Greeks under the Roman Empire,” *DOP* 17 (1963): 4. See also Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, 156–57.

199 As noted, however, there is no evidence that public manumissions were taking place during the first century CE.

most of these slaves paid their owners a release price—the exception being slaves freed by testament and a few expressly set free at no cost (*dōrea*). Many slaves also paid a registration or publication fee to the city. Some female slaves were required to raise a child (or children) for one to three years and then leave that child with their manumitter or designates. It was not uncommon for slaves to pay for their manumission and yet remain in slavery under *paramone*, which often included serving their owner until he or she died. Similarly, some slaves knew that their owner had stipulated in his or her will to manumit them, and they then spent their time in slavery, faithfully serving, waiting for their owner's death. Even when slaves had been raised in the home or were the owner's children by a slave mistress or concubine—situations where affection might exist between owner and slave—the owner usually exacted a release fee and sometimes required the slave to remain in *paramone* before granting manumission. The release fees required of slaves were usually so high—enough to feed a poor family for several years—it is difficult to understand how they could manage to pay them.

Once manumitted, Greek freedpersons suffered liabilities. They were always identified as *apeleutheroi*, freedpersons, and often maligned as servile. They usually did not become citizens, could not vote or hold office, and may have had to pay a special tax associated with freed slaves. They were required to register their manumitter as their *prostatēs*, their manumitter inherited their estate if they died childless, and some freedpersons in Calymna and Athens may have had continuing obligations to their manumitters. Their freedom was not secure, which might have required them to remain close to their manumitters. Many probably left “spouses” and children behind in slavery. So, although they may have been free to “go wherever they wished,” there were many factors that probably kept them in close proximity to the ones who manumitted them.

Nevertheless, most of these slaves appear to have paid an extremely high price for this circumscribed freedom. When they were manumitted, they could own property, form a legal marriage, and have legitimate children. But perhaps more important than anything else, manumission allowed a slave to achieve honor and worth—to experience human dignity.

2 Roman Manumission

2.1 *Reasons for Manumission*

One significant difference between Greek and Roman manumission was that when a Roman citizen manumitted a slave through formal manumission

procedures, that slave became a Roman citizen.²⁰⁰ And while there were many slaves who were manumitted informally, there were opportunities available for them to eventually acquire citizenship.²⁰¹ What motivated an owner to manumit a slave under Roman manumission? The Roman literary sources address this question more directly than the Greek literary sources did. The Roman laws also give some indications of motivation. There are, however, only a handful of Roman manumission inscriptions or papyri,²⁰² and the funerary inscriptions which reference slaves and freedpersons only indirectly address this question.

According to the Roman writers, slaves were primarily given their freedom because they had shown they were worthy of it by their faithfulness and hard work. In the plays of Plautus and Terence, written during the Republic, this is a common theme. In one play, a master tells his slave that he has considered him “a decent and useful person for a long time now” and so the slave asks, “Why don’t you free me if you consider me to be like this?” (Plaut., *Cas.* 281–85 [De Melo]).²⁰³ Cicero, writing during the demise of the Republic speaks of freedpersons as those “who have obtained the advantages of our citizenship by their own virtue” (*Cat.* 4.16). Dionysius of Halicarnassus, reflecting back on the Republic, wrote that “most of these slaves obtained their liberty as a free gift because of meritorious conduct” (*Ant. Rom.* 4.24.4 [Cary]). Another author,

200 It is important to note that Roman citizenship was fundamentally different from Greek citizenship. Youni explains that “being an essentially political right, [Greek] citizenship functioned predominantly in the public sphere, whereas the main effect of Roman *civitas* was protection of its possessor in the exercise of his rights in private law.” Youni, “Greek Practice,” 313.

201 It is critical to note that not every Roman freedperson acquired Roman citizenship—an assumption too often made.

202 Inscription: *CIL* 6.10229 (108 CE, will of Dasumius). Papyri: *P. Hamb.* 1.72 = *CPL* 174 (will, 100–299 CE); *CPL* 221 (will, 142 CE); *P. Oxy.* 474 = Hunt and Edgar, *Select Papyri*, 84 (will, 156–65 CE); *FIRA*² III 50 = Hunt and Edgar, *Select Papyri*, 85 (will, 189–194 CE); *PSI* 1040 (will, 200–299 CE); *MChrest.* 2.362 (*inter amicos*, 212 CE); *P. Lips.* 2.151 (*inter amicos*, 246–267 CE); *P. Oxy.* 2474 (will, 275–299 CE); *P. Oxy.* 1205 (*inter amicos*, 291 CE).

Champlin questions that *P. Hamb.* 1.72 is a will and disregards it, but does not provide his reasoning. He finds only three wills in the papyri that manumit slaves. Edward Champlin, *Final Judgments: Duty and Emotion in Roman Wills, 200 B.C. – A.D. 250* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 35, 141. However, Bradley and Gardner, among others, consider it a will, and so I include it. Keith R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (Belgium: Editions Latomus, 1984; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 97; Jane F. Gardner, “The Purpose of the *Lex Fufia Caninia*,” *EMC* 35, no. 1 (1991): 35–36.

203 See also Plaut., *Poen.* 129–37, Ter., *Andr.* 37–39, and with great sarcasm Ter., *Ad.* 959–77.

writing a declamation in perhaps the second century CE, comments on a man's will: "Why he freed the slaves is clear. He was pleased with their services, he wanted to repay their obedience" ([Quint.] *Dec. Min.* 311.9 [Bailey]).²⁰⁴ Once manumitted, freedpersons were most often praised for their trustworthiness and faithfulness.²⁰⁵ Roman authors give evidence of an ideal that remained consistent from the time of the Republic through the Principate: only those slaves who were worthy and who would make good citizens were manumitted.

While elite Romans may have held this ideal, there is evidence that slaves were freed for a variety of other reasons. The Augustan *lex Aelia Sentia* (4 CE) did not allow slaves manumitted under the age of thirty to become Roman citizens; however, it allowed for several exceptions, and one of those was in the case of "a female slave on account of prospective marriage" (Gaius 1.19). Matthew Perry has explored how marriage informed the status of freedwomen, and he has found that "the inscriptional evidence for patrons married to their freedwomen is considerable, suggesting that manumissions 'for the sake of marriage' (*causa matrimonii*) were reasonably common."²⁰⁶ He references the work of P. R. C. Weaver who studied the funerary inscriptions of *CIL* 6. Of the 700 that commemorated marriages that involved at least one slave or freed person, 143 indicated that the husband had married his own freedwoman.²⁰⁷ It is important to note that these women may not have had a choice about marrying their former owner; and, according to the *lex Julia et Papia*, a freedwoman could not divorce her patron (*Dig.* 24.2.11).²⁰⁸ A later jurist concluded that an owner could force his slave woman to swear to marry him as a condition of

204 As referenced in Matthew J. Perry, *Gender, Manumission, and the Roman Freedwoman* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 200n98.

205 Cicero, *Fam.* iii.6.1 (69), iv.9.1 (231), xiii.21.2 (287); xiii.69.1 (297); Tac., *Hist.* 3.58; Suet., *Cal.* 16.4. See also *CIL* 6.9222.

206 Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*, 54–55.

207 Ibid., 195n64; P. R. C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 179–81. There were only 15 marriages where the wife married her own freedman (2 percent of the marriages versus 20 percent). This difference reflects the societal disapproval of freeborn women marrying slaves or freedmen. The later jurists did allow for a freedwoman to manumit for the purpose of marriage with a stipulation: "Some think that even women can manumit for the purpose of marriage, but only if a fellow slave (*conservus*) has actually been bequeathed to a woman for the purpose" (*Dig.* 40.2.14).

208 Henrik Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 43. Commenting on freedwomen married to their patrons, Kleijwegt writes, "It may be suggested that, in addition to other factors, some men preferred to marry one of their slaves because it allowed them more control over their wives, especially in the first and second centuries CE when women enjoyed progressively more legal freedom than in the first century BCE." Marc Kleijwegt, "Deciphering Freedwomen in the Roman

receiving her freedom (*Dig.* 37.14.6.3). And although another jurist asserts that “a patron cannot marry his freedwoman against her will” (*Dig.* 23.2.28), a second one notes that “this rule does not apply where the patron manumitted her in order to marry her” (*Dig.* 23.2.29). While an owner could designate a slave woman as his concubine, jurists “asserted that women of this status really ought to be manumitted” in order to protect the man’s status.²⁰⁹ Not only did owners free their own slaves for the purpose of marriage, but if plays can reflect social reality, men bought and freed slave women who were their love interests. In the plays of Plautus, this scenario was a regular part of the plot. In *Pseudolus* a character comments, “What extraordinary thing has he done by today’s standards? What novelty is it if a young man is in love and if he sets his girlfriend free?” (433–35 [De Melo]).²¹⁰ Young slave boys were also sometimes freed because they were their master’s love interest.²¹¹

The *lex Aelia Sentia* also allowed for slaves manumitted under the age of thirty to become citizens when they were brought before the praetor, if they were in specific relationships with the manumitter: “a natural son or daughter, or brother or sister, or foster-child (*alumnus*) or teacher (*paedagogus*)” (Gaius 1.19).²¹² This law also stipulated that a manumitter must be 20 years of age to manumit a slave, but by approval of the praetor, such a person could manumit “his father, his mother, his teacher (*paedagogus*), or his foster-brother (*conlactaneus*)” (Gaius 1.39). The later jurists added foster-father or tutor (*educator*), nurse (*nutrix*), and “one who carries books” (*capsarius*) (*Dig.* 40.2.13).

It is important to note that while the law indicates that these relationships were considered “proper cause for manumission” (Gaius 1.19, 39), it cannot tell us how often owners actually manumitted slaves due to these relationships. The literary sources are virtually silent on manumission for these reasons. The funerary inscriptions shed some light. Beryl Rawson examined the funerary inscriptions of *CIL* 6 and *AE* to better understand children in the Roman family who were *alumni* and *vernae*.²¹³ She found that of 431 inscriptions that

Empire,” in *Free at Last! The Impact of Freed Slaves on the Roman Empire*, ed. Sinclair Bell and Teresa Ramsby (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 117.

209 Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*, 40, 183n112.

210 See also *Curc.* 208–214; *Epid.* 241–46; *Most.* 15–25.

211 Martial, *Epigr.* 6.28, 6.29.

212 On foster-children, see also *Dig.* 40.2.14.

213 She defines *alumni* as “usually young persons in a quasi-familial relationship with an older person. They are sometimes of free status, sometimes slave.” Beryl Rawson, “Children in the Roman *Familia*,” in *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*, ed. Beryl Rawson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 173. The term *vernae* refers to “a slave born in the house of its master, as opposed to slaves bought in or otherwise introduced to the *familia*.” *Ibid.*, 186.

referenced *alumni*, 35 such persons were explicitly identified as freedpersons. Since *alumni* can be both freeborn and slaves, it is difficult to know what this number indicates. If only 35 of the *alumni* were of slave status, and thus all were freed, that would indicate being an *alumnus* was of great benefit in regards to manumission. However, if 200 of the *alumni* were of slave status and 35 were freed, being an *alumnus* would not be of much advantage. Rawson also found that of 564 *vernae*, only 21 were explicitly identified as freedpersons. This number would indicate that being a *verna* gave no apparent advantage in regards to manumission. The problem with the inscriptions that complicates any analysis, however, is that status was often not indicated.²¹⁴ From what Rawson was able to extrapolate from the data we have, however, there is not much evidence that being *alumni* or *vernae* led to higher manumission rates. Even more remarkable, Henrik Mouritsen found that of the fourteen young slaves in *CIL* 6 who were identified as natural children (*fili naturales*), only one of them was identified as a freedperson.²¹⁵ He concludes that “there is little evidence to suggest that blood relationship generally led to early manumission.”²¹⁶ There appears to be a difference in social reality then between what the law provided for and what owners actually practiced in regards to manumissions performed due to familial relationships.

Literary sources indicate that other personal relationships, besides those previously mentioned, as well as valued gifts and abilities sometimes led an owner to manumit a slave. Tiro is perhaps the best-known example of a beloved slave being granted his freedom by his master. When Tiro becomes ill and Cicero decides to free him, Cicero writes to him noting Tiro’s “love of literary work and the things of the spirit, which makes you very dear to me” (*Fam.* 41.1) and his “clever brain, which I value so highly” (*Fam.* 42.2). Quintus, writing to congratulate Cicero upon Tiro’s manumission speaks of Tiro’s “literary accomplishments and conversation and culture” (*Fam.* 44.2). Other writers speak of slaves being manumitted due to their wit (Macrob., *Sat.* 2.7.7), skills and learning (Suet., *Gramm.* 3, 15), devotion to literature (Suet., *Gramm.* 13), and interest in writing (Suet., *Rhet.* 27). But as Susan Treggiari observes, manumissions of valuable slaves “must have been confined to masters rich enough to afford such gestures.”²¹⁷ Cicero himself shows that bestowing such freedom

214 Beryl Rawson, “Roman Concubinage and Other De Facto Marriages,” *TAPS* 104 (1974): 283; Henrik Mouritsen, “Slavery and Manumission in the Roman Elite: A Study of the Columbaria of the Volusii and the Statilii,” in *Roman Slavery and Roman Material Culture*, ed. Michele George (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 46.

215 Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 188n309.

216 *Ibid.*, 188.

217 Susan Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen during the Late Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 14.

was offered to very few. When Cicero's brother, Quintus, manumitted his own slave, Staius, Cicero was not pleased (*Att.* 38.4). And when Cicero contemplates losing his property, he writes his wife that her slaves would be manumitted "provided they could make good their claim to the status; whereas, if I still had a hold on them, they would remain my slaves except for just a few" (*Fam.* 6.4). Mouritsen discovered while examining the funerary inscriptions of *CIL* 6 that "some slaves in relatively trusted positions were not freed," and he gives as examples a thirty-five-year-old scribe (*CIL* 6.6595) and a thirty-year-old record keeper (*CIL* 6.6596).²¹⁸ Seneca notes in passing that he still owned an old man who had once been his pet slave (*delicium*).²¹⁹

Sometimes an owner manumitted a slave for a less than noble reason. Apparently, some owners manumitted slaves in order to defraud their creditors,²²⁰ for Gaius writes that the *lex Aelia Sentia* made such manumissions void (Gaius 1.37). Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who came to Rome around 30 BCE, complained that in his day slaves were often being freed without regard to their character and for dishonorable reasons: some slaves made the money to pay for their manumission "by robbery, housebreaking, prostitution and every other base means"; some were complicitous in their master's crimes and were freed for the part they played;²²¹ some were freed to give their portion of a grain or money distribution to the one who freed them;²²² and some masters freed all their slaves in their wills so that they "might be called good men when they were dead and that many people might follow their biers wearing their liberty-caps" (*Ant. Rom.* 4.24.4–6 [Cary]). Some have associated this last complaint with the *lex Fufia Caninia* (2 BCE) which limited how many slaves an owner could manumit in his will.

Slaves could also be manumitted by the state. In his *War with Catiline*, Sallust writes that by decree of the Senate "if anyone should give information concerning the plot which had been formed against the state, as a reward a slave was to have freedom and a hundred thousand sesterces" (30.6–7).²²³ On at least one occasion slaves were set free after serving as soldiers on the war front (Livy 24.14–15). The law also stipulated that a slave who exposed the murder of his or her master would be set free.²²⁴

218 Mouritsen, "Slavery and Manumission in the Roman Elite," 59.

219 *Ep.* 12.3. As referenced in Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 139.

220 A slave could be offered as a pledge for payment.

221 This occurred, however, even in the days of the Republic, Dionysius's "good old days." See Cic., *Cael.* 68; *Mil.* 57.

222 See also Suet., *Aug.* 42.2.

223 See also Livy 4.45.2; 4.61.7–11; 22.33.3; 26.27.6–7; 27.3.6; 32.26.14–15.

224 *Dig.* 29.5.3, 16; 35.2.39; 38.2.4; 40.8.5.

In summary, during the Roman Republic and Principate, the Roman ideal was that owners freed slaves who were faithful and worthy to become citizens. This ideal implied a selectivity. The sources, however, provide evidence of a variety of other reasons for manumission. Women in particular were often manumitted for the purpose of marriage, sometimes to their owner. In addition, women, girls, and sometimes boys were manumitted because they were someone's love interest. The law allowed for exceptions to the age limitations in regards to manumission in cases of blood relationships, foster relationships, and close nurturing relationships (teacher, tutor, nurse). Slaves in close service relationship to the family and those with unusual intelligence, wit, or learning were sometimes manumitted. Some masters manumitted their slaves for dishonorable purposes: to defraud creditors, to cover their crimes, to increase their portion of government largess, or to magnify their reputation for generosity at death. The state manumitted slaves as a reward for service or information involving the murder of their master. One motive never directly addressed by the sources is the ability of owners to benefit financially by manumitting a slave. Since most Roman slaves probably paid for their manumission,²²⁵ the owners (at the least) recouped their investment. But patrons often used their freedpersons to conduct business for them—sometimes directly, sometimes by investing in business through them. In many cases, patrons would inherit much if not all of their freedperson's estate, thus receiving back their investment plus profits.²²⁶ So, while some have seen the large number of slaves manumitted during the Roman empire as evidence of a humanitarian impulse, and perhaps in some individual cases it was, we must not miss that in many cases manumission was simply good business and continued exploitation.²²⁷ As the sources give evidence, only those slaves in close proximity to the master could hope to achieve manumission.²²⁸ Mouritsen astutely observes that “those freed were the winners of this unpredictable game, and one insidious

225 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 118. This idea will be explored further below.

226 This will be explored further below.

227 Horsley notes that “manumission served the interests of slave-master in several ways. It entailed little if any economic loss.” Richard A. Horsley, “The Slave Systems of Classical Antiquity and Their Reluctant Recognition by Modern Scholars,” in *Slavery in Text and Interpretation*, ed. Allen Dwight Callahan, Richard A. Horsley, and Abraham Smith, Semeia, vol. 83/84 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1998), 52. See also Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 128–131; Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 224; Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen*, 16–17, 75–78.

228 Scholars have noted that manumission among rural slaves, who had far less interaction with their owners, probably rarely occurred. See Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 199; Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen*, 106–107.

consequence of the system must have been to make the lot of the slaves who found no favour even harder to bear.”²²⁹

2.2 *Means of Manumission*

Roman citizens could manumit their slaves formally or informally, but only formal manumission resulted in citizenship as well as freedom. Corporate bodies could also manumit slaves and grant them citizenship.

2.2.1 Formal Manumission

The three means of formal manumission were *censu*, *vindicta*, and *testamento*. During the Republic, manumission by one of these three means was the only way by which a slave became a freedperson.²³⁰ Formal manumission always resulted in the freed slave becoming a Roman citizen. The *lex Aelia Sentia* of 4 CE required a slave owner to be twenty years of age (Gaius 1.40) and a slave to be thirty years of age (Gaius 1.18) in order for a slave to be formally manumitted.²³¹ Before we read past this age requirement, we should note Keith Bradley’s observation that “life-expectancy at birth for slaves is not likely to have been much more than twenty years.”²³² Manumission was never guaranteed, but one has to wonder how many slaves died before they could achieve the full freedom for which they had worked so hard.

Manumission by *censu* existed during the Republic when the census was taken every five years for tax assessment and military enrollment purposes, but it fell into disuse after 166 BCE when the census ceased to be taken regularly.²³³ The census resulted in an official list of citizens. If an owner decided to formally manumit a slave, he could instruct the slave to claim to be a citizen before the Censor, and the Censor would add the slave’s name to the list of citizens.²³⁴ Since the census only took place in Rome,²³⁵ proximity to the city would be a constraint in performing this type of manumission.

229 Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 204.

230 W. W. Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery: The Condition of the Slave in Private Law from Augustus to Justinian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908; reprint, New York: AMS, 1969), 444; Jane F. Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen* (London: Routledge, 1993), 7.

231 As discussed earlier, some exceptions were allowed.

232 Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 96.

233 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 439–40; Alan Watson, *Roman Slave Law* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 16, 24.

234 Ulpian 1.8; Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 440. Watson notes that there is a question “whether the censor openly declared he was giving citizenship to the (now ex-) slave, or whether he operated under the fiction that the enrolled citizen had always been a citizen.” Watson, *Roman Slave Law*, 24.

235 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 441.

Manumission by *vindicta* took the form of a fictive lawsuit before a Roman magistrate: a person called the *assertor libertatis*, often the magistrate's *lictor*, claimed the slave was a free person and touched the slave with a *vindicta*, or rod; the owner made no defense against the claim; the magistrate then declared the slave to be free.²³⁶ This procedure did not have to take place in a courtroom. The law explains that slaves over the age of thirty could be "manumitted at any time, and the ceremony can be performed even while walking in the streets, as for instance, when the praetor or the proconsul is on his way to the bath or the theatre" (Gaius 1.20).²³⁷ Some literary sources speak of the master, as part of the ceremony, slapping the slave and turning him around. Persius (34–62 CE) comments with sarcasm, "Alas, how barren of truth are those who think one twirl creates a Roman citizen! Here is Dama, a worthless lackey, runny-eyed with cheap wine, who'd cheat over a handful of animal feed. Let his master turn him around and with the spinning of a top out comes Marcus Dama. Amazing!" (*Sat.* 5.75–79 [Braund]).²³⁸ What the slap and turning around indicated is debated, but some conjecture that the slap was the last insult of slavery and the turning signified the change of the slave's status.²³⁹

Manumission by *testamento* freed a slave upon the death of his or her owner by direction of the owner's will.²⁴⁰ Slaves freed in this manner were called *liberti orcin*i because their patron resided in Orcus, the abode of the dead.²⁴¹ An owner could request someone else to free a slave after his or her death, with freedom usually contingent upon further service. This request was called a *fideicommissum*, and until 103 CE with the *Senatus-consultum Rubrianum* the person tasked with freeing the slave was only morally, not legally, obligated to follow through on the request.²⁴² Manumission by *testamento* was unique in several ways. First, it was the only one of the three modes of formal manumission that was not based on a fiction.²⁴³ Second, it was the most prolonged form of manumission in that the slave had to wait until the death of his or her owner

236 Ulpian 1.7; *ibid.*, 441, 715–16; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 9–10; Henry John Roby, *Roman Private Law: In the Times of Cicero and of the Antonines*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 25–26.

237 See also *Dig.* 40.2.7.

238 See also Epict., *Diatr.* 2.1.26–28; Petron., *Sat.* 38; Pl., *Phaedr.* 2.5.25; Sen., *Ep.* 1.8.7.

239 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 451; A. M. Duff, *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1928; reprint, Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino, 2007), 24; R. G. Nisbet, "The Festuca and the Alapa of Manumission," *JRS* 8 (1918): 8.

240 There are seven extant Roman wills that mention manumitting slaves (listed in footnote 202), but they are all later than the first century CE.

241 *Dig.* 40.5.4.12; Duff, *Freedmen*, 25; Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 51.

242 Duff, *Freedmen*, 26.

243 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 443.

(or if stipulations were added, sometimes much longer) to receive freedom. Those slaves who knew they had been granted freedom in their owners' wills had to work hard to remain in good favor, lest they fall out of favor and the owner remove the provision from the will.²⁴⁴ And third, it was the "most glaring departure from the ideal of patronal guidance" in that a slave freed in this manner in effect had no patron.²⁴⁵

Augustan legislation of 3 BCE, called the *lex Fufia Caninia*, limited the number of slaves an owner could manumit through *testamento*. An owner could manumit all his slaves through any other mode, but the *lex Fufia* provided a sliding scale for the number allowed under a will, with the upper limit being 100 regardless of the total number of slaves owned (Gaius 1.43).²⁴⁶ Why did Augustus enact this legislation? Some scholars consider the complaint of Dionysius of Halicarnassus—that some masters freed all their slaves in their will to heighten their reputation and to have a large entourage at their funeral (*Ant. Rom.* 4.24.6)—and believe that such a practice was indeed common. W. W. Buckland came to a different conclusion and suggested that Augustus wanted to curb the number of slaves freed and prevent disadvantage to heirs.²⁴⁷ However, owners could still manumit all their slaves during their lifetime, so neither one of these goals would be met by this one law. In addition, Kathleen Atkinson argues that Roman testators were concerned about protecting the value of the property left to their heirs, and they would not negatively impact that value by releasing so many slaves.²⁴⁸ Edward Champlin's research appears to confirm Atkinson's argument. Champlin examined Roman testaments and did not find slaves manumitted in large numbers; one very wealthy patron, Dasumius, freed less than fifteen.²⁴⁹ Therefore, the purpose of the *lex Fufia* was likely to curb the creation of freedpersons who had no patron, thus attempting "to rescue a particular ideal of the freedman-patron relationship."²⁵⁰

244 Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 99.

245 Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 51. The ongoing relationship between freedperson and patron will be explored further below.

246 If the owner had 1–2 slaves, he or she could manumit all; 3–10, up to half; 11–30, up to one third; 31–100, up to one fourth; 101–500, up to one fifth (Gaius 1.43).

247 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 547.

248 Kathleen Atkinson, "The Purpose of the Manumission Laws of Augustus," *IJ* 1 (1966): 368.

249 Champlin, *Final Judgments*, 141; *CIL* 6.10229.

250 Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 52. Gardner argues that since the heir(s) became the patron of slaves freed by testament, the concern was specifically with childless testators (Gardner, "The *Lex Fufia Caninia*," 27–28). Sirks has proposed that the law was enacted to protect the inheritance due an extraneous heir versus an heir who was a descendant (A. J. B. Sirks, "The Purpose of the *Lex Fufia Caninia*," *ZSS* 129, no. 1 [2013]: 552). However, the problem that ensued for an extraneous heir would still exist for freedpersons manumitted during

2.2.2 Informal Manumission

Scholars mention three means of informal manumission: *per epistulam*, *per mensam*, and *inter amicos*. Citizens could informally manumit their slaves during the Republic but they legally remained slaves. At the end of the Republic, the Praetor could intervene, if he chose, and provide informally freed slaves *de facto* freedom.²⁵¹ These slaves could not be forced to work, but they remained in effect slaves, any children they had were slaves, and their peculium continued to belong to their owner.²⁵² With the passage of the *lex Junia*,²⁵³ slaves manumitted informally by a Roman citizen became a Junian Latin—a freedperson, but not a Roman citizen.²⁵⁴ Junian Latins could become Roman citizens if their patrons chose to repeat the manumission process using one of the formal procedures (*iteratio*),²⁵⁵ if someone petitioned the emperor on their behalf,²⁵⁶ or if they met one of several special requirements stipulated in the law.²⁵⁷ They “could and did carry the *tria nomina*”²⁵⁸ making it difficult to distinguish between Junian Latins and formally manumitted freedpersons in the sources.²⁵⁹ Given this limitation, it is impossible to know how many

the lifetime of the owner, so it is unclear why only manumissions *testamento* were limited if this were the problem being addressed.

251 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 444–45; Watson, *Roman Slave Law*, 28; Gaius 3.56.

252 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 445.

253 There is debate when this law was passed. Crook and Gardner conclude 19 CE. John Crook, *Law and Life of Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 43–44; Gardner, “The *Lex Fufia Caninia*,” 3125. Atkinson concludes 18 BCE, while Buckland simply argues that it was earlier than the *lex Aelia Sentia* of 4 CE. Atkinson, “Manumission Laws of Augustus,” 360; Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 534–37.

254 More will be said on Junian Latins below.

255 Barry Nicholas, *An Introduction to Roman Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), 75; Ulrike Roth, “*Peculium*, Freedom, Citizenship: Golden Triangle or Vicious Circle? An Act in Two Parts,” in *By the Sweat of Your Brow: Roman Slavery in Its Socio-Economic Setting*, ed. Ulrike Roth, vol. 109 (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2010), 109, 114; Pliny, *Ep.* 7.16.

256 Pliny, *Ep.* 10.5.1–2; 10.6.1–2; 10.11.1–2.

257 Junian Latins could receive citizenship if they married and had a son who was one year old (Gaius 1.29; *AE* 305 = *TH* 89 [62 CE]), served in the *vigiles* for six (and later three) years (Gaius 1.32b), built a grain ship and transported grain to Rome for six years (Gaius 1.32c), built a house in Rome worth at least 100,000 sesterces (Gaius 1.33), or worked as a miller in Rome for at least three years (Gaius 1.34).

258 The *tria nomina* is the term for the Roman personal nomenclature which included three names: *praenomen*, *nomen* (*gentilicium*), and *cognomen*. The *tria nomina* did not indicate that a person was a Roman citizen. See P. R. C. Weaver, “Children of Junian Latins,” in *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*, ed. Beryl Rawson and P. R. C. Weaver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 56.

259 Roth, “*Peculium*, Freedom, Citizenship,” 118; Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 179–81; P. R. C.

manumissions were informal versus formal,²⁶⁰ although Ulrike Roth argues that informal manumissions were preferred by owners, for reasons to be explored shortly.²⁶¹

Manumission *per epistulam* took place when an owner wrote a letter granting a slave freedom and indicated the terms of the manumission.²⁶² References to this means of manumission are only made by later jurists, however, so this form may not have been practiced during the Republic and early Roman Principate.²⁶³

Manumission *per mensam* occurred when an owner invited a slave to sit and eat at his table, thus indicating his or her change in status from slave to free.²⁶⁴ There is no reference to this means of manumission until the late Empire.²⁶⁵ In his essay “*On Master and Slave*,” Seneca writes, “That is why I smile at those who think it degrading for a man to dine with his slave. But why should they think it degrading? It is only because purse-proud etiquette surrounds a householder at his dinner with a mob of standing slaves” (47.2 [Gummere]). Seneca does not indicate here that a master inviting a slave to sit at the dinner table resulted in manumission—simply that it shows consideration to a fellow human being. Seneca’s essay seems to give evidence that *per mensam* was a later method of informal manumission.

Manumission *inter amicos* took place when an owner declared a slave free “in the presence of friends” (Gaius 1.41, 44).²⁶⁶ This mode of freeing slaves is documented in three later Roman deeds of manumission.²⁶⁷ This informal means of manumission likely arose some time during the Republic when formal means were not available.²⁶⁸ If the plays of Plautus and Terence can

Weaver, “Children of Freedmen (and Freedwomen),” in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*, ed. Beryl Rawson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 184–85, 188–89. Contra Lauren Hackworth Petersen, *The Freedman in Roman Art and Art History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 109.

260 Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*, 202n113.

261 Roth, “*Peculium*, Freedom, Citizenship,” 117.

262 Duff, *Freedmen*, 21; Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 444; A. J. B. Sirks, “Informal Manumission and the Lex Junia,” *RIDA* 28 (1981): 248; Watson, *Roman Slave Law*, 30.

263 *Dig.* 41.2.38.1; *Cod. Iust.* 7.6.1; Eleonora Nicosia, “Manumissio per Epistulam,” *RIDA* 47 (2000): 232.

264 Duff, *Freedmen*, 21.

265 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 446., referred to as *in convivio*. Watson speculates that *in convivio* may be a variation of *inter amicos*. Watson, *Roman Slave Law*, 31.

266 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 444; Duff, *Freedmen*, 21; Sirks, “Informal Manumission,” 248; Watson, *Roman Slave Law*, 30; *Cod. Iust.* 7.6.2.

267 *P. Lips.* 2.151 (246–267 CE); *P. Oxy.* 1205 (291 CE); *MChrest.* 2.362 (212 CE). As referenced in Roth, “*Peculium*, Freedom, Citizenship,” 105.

268 Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen*, 29.

be considered a reflection of social reality, then *inter amicos* was a simple declaration, sometimes with no witnesses necessary.²⁶⁹

2.2.3 Corporate Manumission

The state, municipalities, and *collegia*²⁷⁰ could manumit corporately held slaves, and the state could also grant freedom to individually owned slaves.²⁷¹ The state manumitted slaves by decree of the Senate or the emperor.²⁷² The emperor, as head of state, could free his own slaves by simply declaring a slave to be free (*Dig.* 40.1.14). Municipalities manumitted slaves by decree of the local council and approval of the governor of the province (*Cod. Iust.* 7.9.1, 2).²⁷³ *Collegia* did not gain the right to manumit until the time of Marcus Aurelius (*Dig.* 40.3.1), and the form of manumission they used is not known.²⁷⁴

2.3 Cost of Manumission

Most costs of Roman manumission, if not all—whether financial or other—were born by the slave. There was one monetary cost, however, that at times was paid by the owner. Beginning in 357 BCE and continuing through the fourth century CE, the *vicesima libertatis*, a five percent tax on manumission, was collected by the Roman state.²⁷⁵ Once the *lex Junia* was passed, it is likely that the tax was assessed on slaves manumitted both formally and informally.²⁷⁶

269 Plaut., *Men.* 1029; Ter., *Ad.* 970. See also *ibid.*

270 A *collegium* can be most simply defined as “any private association of fixed membership and constitution.” Piero Treves, Cyril Bailey, and Andrew Lintott, “Collegium,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

271 In the *Digest* the state manumitting an individual’s slave falls under the heading “Persons who Obtain Freedom without Manumission” (40.8); thus legally, this grant of freedom was apparently not considered manumission *per se*. Sometimes the state compensated the owner (*Dig.* 29.5.16; Livy 32.26.14–15), and sometimes it did not (Suet., *Claud.* 25.1–2).

272 Sall., *Bell. Cat.* 30.3–7; Livy 24.14.3–10, 32.26.14–15; *CIL* 6.2340. Buckland comments on the decree by the emperor that “whether the Senate concurred or not cannot be said, but such a concurrence must have soon become merely a form.” Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 590.

273 *Ibid.*, 589. Municipalities outside of Italy may not have gained the right to manumit until a decree of the Senate in 129 CE (*Cod. Iust.*, 7.9.3).

274 *Ibid.*, 588. Buckland speculates that, considering how the ruling body of the state and municipalities freed slaves in their respective spheres, “a vote of the *collegium* or its governing body, if it had one, sufficed.” *Ibid.*, 588n14.

275 Livy 7.16.7; Keith R. Bradley, “The *vicesima libertatis*: Its History and Significance,” *Klio* 66 (1984): 176.

276 Mouritsen notes a passage in the *Satyricon* where a slave is freed on his deathbed and the owner is expected to pay the *vicesimal*. Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 88n95; *Sat.* 65). See also

Sometimes this tax was paid by the slave²⁷⁷ and sometimes by the master.²⁷⁸ Scholars have suggested that when the slave paid for manumission, then he or she paid the manumission tax, but when the owner provided manumission *gratis*, then the master paid it.²⁷⁹

It is debated how often Roman slaves paid a manumission or release price. Hopkins argues that "Roman slaves, frequently, even customarily in my view, paid substantial sums for their freedom,"²⁸⁰ while Mouritsen looks to the ongoing patron/freedperson relationship and contends that "payment for freedom was seen as a departure from the norm."²⁸¹ The sparse documentary evidence we have of Roman manumission is all later than the first century CE. Roth points out that the three papyri recording manumissions *inter amicos* all indicate a release price was paid by the slave.²⁸² While none of the seven extant wills which free a slave include a monetary payment,²⁸³ the law code often refers to an owner requiring a release price as a stipulation of manumission by *testamento* (*Dig.* 12.6.53, 40.4.11, 40.7.14, 40.7.29.1).²⁸⁴ The law code also refers to self-purchase (*suis nummis emptus*).²⁸⁵ In this situation, a slave gave his release price to a third party who used the money to buy the slave from his or her owner with the agreement that the third party would free the slave after the purchase.²⁸⁶ Suetonius speaks of this type of arrangement taking place as far back as the time of Sulla (*Gramm.* 13).²⁸⁷ Roman literary sources often speak of slaves paying a release price. Seneca notes that slaves "in exchange for freedom ... pay out the savings (*peculium*) which they have scraped together by

Duff, *Freedmen*, 23. Contra Bradley who states the tax was only paid on formal manumissions. Bradley, "The *vicesima libertatis*," 175.

277 Epict., *Diatr.* 4.1.33; Petron., *Sat.* 58.

278 Epict., *Diatr.* 2.1.26–28; Petron., *Sat.* 71; *CIL* 6.10229 (108 CE); *CPL* 221 (142 CE).

279 Frank Frost Abbott and Allan Chester Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926), 124; Bradley, "The *vicesima libertatis*," 177; Duff, *Freedmen*, 29.

280 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 118.

281 Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 166.

282 Roth, "Peculium, Freedom, Citizenship," 105. The release prices are as follows: 2200 drachmae (female slave)—*MChrest.* 2.362 (212 CE); 3000 drachmae (female slave)—*P. Lips.* 2.151 (246–267 CE); 14 talents (mother and two children)—*P. Oxy.* 1205 (291 CE). Converting drachmae to sesterces, we arrive at the approximate prices of 7770, 10,600 and 336,000 sesterces.

283 See footnote 202 for a listing of these documents.

284 As referenced in Champlin, *Final Judgments*, 139n39. He notes that this release price would have likely come from the slave's *peculium*.

285 *Dig.* 1.12.1.1; 2.4.10; 5.1.67; 40.1.4; 40.1.5.

286 Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 37; Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 172.

287 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 637 and n2.

cheating their own bellies" (*Ep.* 80.4 [Gummere]). Characters in the plays of Plautus speak of slaves needing money to become free: "He's human; he wants to become free, but doesn't have anything to pay" (*Trin.* 564–65 [De Melo]).²⁸⁸ In Petronius's *Satyricon*, Hermeros states, "I paid a thousand denarii for my freedom" (57). Pliny the Elder mentions that actors in his time paid more than 700,000 sesterces when "buying their own freedom by means of their earnings" (*Nat.* 7.128 [Rackham]).²⁸⁹

If we take the release price Hermeros says he paid (1,000 denarii = 4,000 sesterces)²⁹⁰ and compare that to what a Roman soldier earned in one year (1,200 sesterces),²⁹¹ we have some insight into how high the price of manumission for slaves may have been.²⁹² For those slaves who did pay a release price, how did they raise such funds? Roman slaves were given a *peculium*, a fund which legally belonged to the owner but was "spoken of as, *de facto*, the property of the slave."²⁹³ Slaves could increase their *peculium* in a variety of ways, such as selling part of their food allowance (*Sen., Ep.* 80.4), selling left-over food from the owner's table (*Apul., Metam.* 10.13–14), or receiving profits or earnings from business done for the owner (*Dig.* 2.13.4.3). The *peculium* could include non-monetary items such as farms, houses, slaves, and cattle (*Dig.* 15.1.57, 33.8.6), and thus could be quite valuable in some cases.²⁹⁴

The common scholarly view is that a master gave the slave his or her *peculium* upon manumission, and thus the manumission was *gratis*. Roth, however, examines the legal material and concludes instead that a slave typically paid a release price from the *peculium* and only retained the difference between the release price and the value of the *peculium* itself.²⁹⁵ Roth goes on to argue that many slaves paid a release price not once, but twice: once for freedom, and again for citizenship. With the advent of the *lex Junia*, an owner could now manumit a slave informally, equip him or her "with a juicy *peculium* in order to trade on his or her behalf," avoid legal responsibility, and yet still retain legal succession to the slave's *peculium* upon the slave's death.²⁹⁶ Roth thus asserts that it was not just a few "high flyers amongst slaves" who paid for their

288 See also *Aul.* 309–310; *Poen.* 519; *Rud.* 927–31.

289 For other manumission prices see *Dig.* 12.4.3.5 (10,000 sesterces), *ILS* 7812 (first c. CE, 50,000 sesterces). As referenced in Richard Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 349.

290 The least of the manumission prices in our sources.

291 Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire*, 12.

292 Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 107.

293 Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 187.

294 *Ibid.*

295 Roth, "Peculium, Freedom, Citizenship," 94, 104.

296 *Ibid.*, 110–11.

manumission from their *peculium*, but this ability for the patron to both benefit and continue to exploit “affected, in principle, all informally freed slaves.”²⁹⁷ Because Junian Latins suffered disadvantages due to their lack of citizenship, they were then set to begin again the same process that had earned them manumission: “working, once more, by the sweat of their brow, to accumulate resources that increased their *peculia*” so that their patrons would agree to now manumit them formally.²⁹⁸

There is evidence that slaves did not always provide the funds for the release price themselves. The law code indicates that the slave could obtain the money by chance, by the generosity of a friend, or by a loan (*Dig.* 40.1.4.1). And sometimes a third party bought the slave to release him or her. The funerary inscriptions give evidence that some freedpersons bought and freed their relatives who remained in slavery.²⁹⁹ And some owners released their slaves requiring no payment at all. But Roth has provided convincing evidence that most slaves, once the *lex Junia* passed, not only paid for their manumission but for their citizenship as well.

Slaves did not just pay monetarily for their freedom and citizenship. If an owner did not require a release price, he or she could require the slave to provide *operae*—ongoing labor and services after manumission, specified by a number of days of work (*Dig.* 38.1.1).³⁰⁰ These *operae* could be passed on to the patron’s heirs.³⁰¹ In testamentary manumissions, stipulations could be placed on the slave receiving his or her freedom such as the rendering of accounts (*Dig.* 40.4.8),³⁰² repayment of money (*Dig.* 40.4.8), building a block of apartments or erecting a statue (*Dig.* 40.4.13), an heir reaching a designated age

297 Ibid., 113, 114.

298 Ibid., 114. The state did offer other ways to acquire citizenship (see footnote 257), but such means were all quite difficult.

299 *CIL* 3.2371 (*filio et liberto*); *CIL* 5.4389 (*matri et liberta*); *CIL* 14.3360 (*libertus idem filius*); *ILS* 8388 (*filiae suae et liberta*). Duff comments that these inscriptions “can only mean that someone after being freed has devoted his or her energies and resources to the rescue of a relative from servitude.” Duff, *Freedmen*, 60 and n2. Perry also references *CIL* 6.37826, which indicates a freedwoman manumitted her *contubernalis*. Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*, 196n76.

300 An owner could not require both a release price and *operae* (*Dig.* 38.2.3.4). Mouritsen notes that “outside the legal sources the institution is virtually absent.” Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 224. He goes on to argue that the practice of *operae* was not in wide use, although scholars tend to speak as if it were commonplace. Roth’s work showing that most slaves paid for their freedom with their *peculium* also supports the conclusion that slaves performing *operae* were likely the exception—most had a heavier burden to bear.

301 Duff, *Freedmen*, 45; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 29.

302 This would involve a slave presenting the accounts that had been under his management to the heirs to show that all was accounted for and settled appropriately.

(*Dig.* 40.4.16), the death of an heir (*Dig.* 40.4.18), or a specified number of years after the death of the owner (*Dig.* 40.4.41). Slaves under such stipulations were called *statuliberi* because conditions had to be fulfilled before their freedom was granted.

There is literary evidence that women could receive their freedom by providing a certain number of slave children for their owners. Columella wrote: "To women, too, who are unusually prolific, and who ought to be rewarded for the bearing of a certain number of offspring, I have granted exemption from work and sometimes even freedom after they had reared many children. For to a mother of three sons exemption from work was granted; to a mother of more her freedom as well" (*Arb.* 1.8.19 [Ash]). The law code also refers to women being set free for bearing three children (*Dig.* 1.5.15, 40.7.3.16).³⁰³

A rather unexplored cost for women is marriage to their patrons. Perry comments that "surviving sources highlight sexual relationships with male owners as a principal intimate bond contributing to the manumission of female slaves."³⁰⁴ It is important to keep in mind that such "intimacy" was often forced sexual exploitation. The master may have felt a bond with the object of his sexual desire, but it is to be questioned if the woman would have felt that way—surely many simply experienced the situation as coercion. While scholars have acknowledged, usually in passing, that some (many or most?) of these women had no choice in accepting marriage with their patron, they do not appear to have explored the implications.³⁰⁵ Was being free and married to your former owner better than being a slave and sexually exploited by any male he allowed? Was it significant that any further children you bore would be born free? Surely. But no one seems to acknowledge that this freedom came with a cost. There is inscriptional evidence that girls were freed and married to their patrons as young as ten years old.³⁰⁶ In other cases where the women are older, it is likely that at least some of them had fellow slave "spouses" (*contubernales*) before they caught the attention of their master.³⁰⁷ And once married

303 As referenced in Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*, 58.

304 *Ibid.*, 54.

305 For example, Perry acknowledges that "it was well within [an owner's] power to establish a situation where marriage was the only alternative to slavery," but does not pursue how such a forced marriage might impact the freedwoman. *Ibid.*, 91.

306 In his research of inscriptions from *CIL* 6, Weaver notes two cases where freedwomen were married to their patrons at the ages of ten and thirteen. Weaver, *The Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves*, 183.

307 Slaves had no legal rights and therefore could not have a legal marriage. The Romans considered the marital relationship between slaves as simply cohabitation and called it *contubernium*. The owner was not obligated to recognize this relationship. See Duff, *Freedmen*, 59; Gaius 1.57a.

to their patrons, as noted earlier, freedwomen could not divorce them (*Dig.* 24.2.11). While manumission for the purpose of marriage to a patron certainly offered freedom, it was circumscribed freedom and one in which the woman remained under the control of the man who had owned and sexually used her as a slave: the woman moved from one forced relationship to, perhaps often, another forced relationship. While there were probably some patron/freed-woman marriages that were consensual, we must not fall prey to assuming they all were. How many of these marriages simply came about because a patron exercised his prerogative and authority to create such a marriage?

In summary, Roman slaves paid a high price for their freedom. Most of them likely paid a significant monetary price from their hard-earned *peculium* for both their freedom and their citizenship. Some who paid no fee were required to offer *operae*, even to the patron's heirs. Those who were given their freedom through testamentary manumission often had stipulations to meet such as the rendering of accounts, building a block of apartments, or waiting for the death of an heir. Women, in particular, paid a high cost for their freedom. Some achieved freedom by providing children for their owners whom they left behind in slavery. Others arrived at their freedom through a non-consensual marriage with their patron—sometimes as a child, perhaps sometimes leaving behind a slave-partner—with little hope of ever leaving the man who had enslaved them. Freedom for Roman slaves was rarely a gift offered freely by their owners—the freedom they coveted and worked for usually came at great cost.³⁰⁸

2.4 *Extent of Freedom*

Like the Greeks, the Romans had terminology that legally and socially distinguished free persons from slaves who had been set free. A freed slave was never called a freeborn person, *ingenuus*, but rather a *libertus*. The means by which a slave was manumitted, whether informally or formally, determined the extent of freedom he or she experienced.

As mentioned earlier, prior to the enactment in the early Principate of the *lex Junia*, citizens could informally manumit their slaves but they legally remained slaves. These slaves could not be forced to work, but any children they had were slaves and their *peculium* continued to belong to their owner.³⁰⁹ Once the *lex*

³⁰⁸ As Roth states it, "There were slaves who were released entirely out of the goodness of their masters' hearts, benefiting from all their *peculium* allowances and what other allowances they had been granted: but I doubt there were (proportionally speaking) many of these." Roth, "*Peculium*, Freedom, Citizenship," 116.

³⁰⁹ Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 445.

Junia was passed, slaves manumitted informally by a Roman citizen became a Junian Latin. These freedpersons had property rights³¹⁰ and could enter into a legal marriage (Gaius 1.29), but they could not create a will (Gaius 1.23) and did not become a Roman citizen (Gaius 1.17).³¹¹ Patrons could invest in Junian Latins to carry out business and avoid legal liability,³¹² and when these freedpersons died, the patrons inherited their entire property (Gaius 3.56).³¹³ If patrons invested in a formally freed slave, they might or might not inherit even a portion of the freedperson's estate; but when they invested in a Junian Latin, they knew they would receive the investment back in full.³¹⁴ Informally manumitting a slave after the *lex Junia* worked to the great benefit of the owner.

Formally freed slaves had property rights and could enter into a legal marriage.³¹⁵ They could create a will (Gaius 3.40) and became Roman citizens (Gaius 1.17). Their freedom, however, was circumscribed in a variety of ways. In the public sphere, while there was no law against freedmen being elected to the Senate or becoming an *equites*, there is no evidence of a freedman achieving either status.³¹⁶ The *lex Judiciaria* legislated by C. Gracchus in 123 BCE barred freedmen from serving as judges.³¹⁷ During the reign of Tiberius, the *lex Visellia* barred freedmen from becoming magistrates or decurions in the municipalities.³¹⁸ Freedmen, however, could hold office in Caesar's colonies, where there were large numbers of freedpersons,³¹⁹ and Claudius appointed freedmen to serve in the province of Judea (Tac., *Hist.* 5.9). While freeborn

³¹⁰ Nicholas, *An Introduction to Roman Law*, 65.

³¹¹ Rome was willing to provide these former slaves freedom but not citizenship. This withholding of citizenship is evidence that Rome was concerned with social control and integration. This idea will be discussed further below.

³¹² Roth, "*Peculium*, Freedom, Citizenship," 110; Sirks, "Informal Manumission," 273. Masters could use slaves to carry out business but could be held legally responsible.

³¹³ Roth, "*Peculium*, Freedom, Citizenship," 107–108; Sirks, "Informal Manumission," 252.

³¹⁴ Roth, "*Peculium*, Freedom, Citizenship," 110–11; Sirks, "Informal Manumission," 272.

³¹⁵ Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen*, 82–86.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 62. Treggiari notes that "the qualifications for office were not legal, but social and economic: prestige, wealth, education, and support" (p. 63). The one exception to a freedman becoming an *equites* might have been when a freedman was granted the *ius annuli aurei*, the "right to wear the gold ring," from the Emperor. Duff, *Freedmen*, 85. Duff explains that when a freedman was awarded this status, he was considered an *ingenuus* and had the right to pursue any office open to a freeborn person. A freedman who was granted the gold ring could then set out to achieve the status of *equites*, but it appears that he was not simply given such status. Richard Duncan-Jones, *Power and Privilege in Roman Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 124.

³¹⁷ Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen*, 63; Watson, *Roman Slave Law*, 44.

³¹⁸ Jean Andreau, "The Freedman," in *The Romans*, ed. Andrea Giardina, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 190.

³¹⁹ Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen*, 63.

persons could not be examined under torture (*Dig.* 48.18.12), freedpersons—like slaves—could be, unless it involved a capital case against their patron (*Dig.* 48.18.1.9; 48.19.11.1).³²⁰ In the private sphere, while a freedperson could create a will, he or she faced stipulations. Jane Gardner summarizes the expansion of the patron's rights over the freedperson's estate as found in Gaius 3.39–42:

- (i) Under the Twelve Tables, if a freedman died intestate, leaving no *sui heredes* (automatic heirs, i.e., no children or wife *in manus*), the patron or his children (or grandchildren, etc. in the male line) would succeed,
- (ii) Later, under the praetor's edict, this was modified to allow the patron to succeed on intestacy, against certain heirs, i.e. adopted children and wife *in manu*, and to take a half share even if there was a will, (iii) Later still, under the *lex Papia Poppaea* (AD 9) the patron could claim a share, will or no will, even against natural (i.e. biological) children, and it took three children to exclude his claim entirely.³²¹

It is clear that during the Principate, even when a freedperson created a will, his or her patron would usually still inherit some of the estate. While patrons may have invested in their freedpersons from a type of familial tie or affection, it cannot be ignored that investing in them was simply good business.

Freedwomen experienced even more limitations.³²² As far back as the Twelve Tables, the law required the former owner, now patron, to be the *tutela legitima* for his freedwoman.³²³ While every Roman woman was required to have a *tutor*,³²⁴ the freedwoman was required to have her patron (if a man) as her *tutor*, thus establishing a life-long legal relationship. The *lex Julia et Papia* released a Roman woman from *tutela* once she bore three children and a

320 Duff, *Freedmen*, 63. See also Tac., *Ann.* 16.20.

321 Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 21. The last stipulation only applied to freedpersons with estates worth 100,000 sesterces or more.

322 There was one more category of freedpersons who had more limitations than freedwomen, and those were the *dediticii*. These were former slaves who were convicted criminals (Gaius 1.15), or who were chained as punishment, branded, tortured and found guilty, or fought as gladiators (Ulpian 1.11). Such freedpersons could never be Roman citizens (Gaius 1.26), could make no will, and could not live within one hundred miles of Rome (Gaius 1.27). See Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, 544–46.

323 W. W. Buckland, *A Text-Book of Roman Law from Augustus to Justinian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 89. Perry explains that “since *tutores* had to be male, a freedwoman with a female patron had a guardian appointed by a magistrate (Gaius 1.195).” Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*, 210n57.

324 Buckland, *Roman Law*, 120, 148–49.

freedwoman once she bore four children (Gaius 1.145, 194).³²⁵ Treggiari examines the funerary inscriptions and notes that freedpersons' families were often small, giving "the impression that the childbearing years after manumission tended to be short. More than two children are rarely found on inscriptions."³²⁶ So it appears unlikely that many freedwomen managed to be released from their patron's *tutela*. Being *tutor* for his freedwoman allowed the patron the authority approve any marriage she entered into *cum manu*, any will she created, and any slave she wanted to manumit formally, among other legal and financial decisions.³²⁷ This authority gave the patron a continuing control over his freedwoman's estate. Even if a freedwoman bore four children and thus could create a will apart from the approval of her patron, the patron still, by law, would inherit part of her estate (Gaius 3.44).³²⁸ In addition, a patron could not be held liable for chastising or berating his freedwoman (*Dig.* 47.10.11.7); such treatment of a freeborn woman was not allowed.³²⁹ And as mentioned previously, a freedwoman could not refuse to marry her patron (*Dig.* 23.2.29) or divorce him (*Dig.* 24.2.11).

Freedpersons also suffered social disadvantages. Mouritsen explains that "freed slaves carried a trace of their former status, ... *macula servitutis*, the 'stain of slavery' which never left the freedman."³³⁰ Some freedpersons carried physical scars from their slavery and these marked them as servile. Horace writes in one of his epodes addressed to a wealthy freedman: "You with your flanks scarred by Spanish ropes and your legs by iron fetters. You may strut around as proudly as you like on account of your money—fortune does not alter breeding" (*Epod.* 4.3–6 [Rudd]).³³¹ Freedpersons could also be identified as former slaves by their names: "No ex-slave could avoid a confrontation with his servile past when giving his name as Syrus (the 'Syrian'), Thrax (the 'Thracian'), Melissus ('Bee') or Pardalus ('Panther')."³³² Since many freedpersons stayed near

325 Ibid., 169. During and after the reign of Claudius, a wealthy freedwoman could build a ship for the transport of grain to Rome and thereby gain release from *tutela* (Suet., *Claud.* 18–19). See Kleijwegt, "Deciphering Freedwomen in the Roman Empire," 117–18.

326 Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen*, 214. See also Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*, 136.

327 Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*, 83.

328 Ibid., 136. This differed from freedmen who once they had three children could deny their patron any inheritance (Gaius 3.42).

329 Ibid., 76.

330 Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 12; *Dig.* 40.11.5; *Cod. Iust.* 7.16.9, 10.32.2.

331 See also Juv., *Sat.* 1.97–114.

332 Marc Kleijwegt, "Freed Slaves, Self-Presentation and Corporate Identity in the Roman World," in *The Faces of Freedom: The Manumission and Emancipation of Slaves in Old World and New World Slavery*, ed. Marc Kleijwegt (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 94.

their patron, changing their name would have been difficult.³³³ Martial mocks a freedman who tried, “Cinnamus, you bid us call you Cinna. I ask you, is that not a barbarism?” (*Epigr.* 6.17 [Bailey]). While freedpersons could accumulate considerable wealth, and imperial freedmen wielded much influence and even power, they were often despised by the social elite. Augustus never invited a freedman to dinner (Suet., *Aug.* 74.1), and Martial reminds a wealthy freedman that he could never have the status of free birth: “Your roof rests on a hundred columns, and your strongbox whips up freedman’s wealth.... But what I am, you cannot be; what you are, any man in the street can be” (*Epigr.* 5.13 [Bailey]).³³⁴ And while freedpersons were valued for their loyalty and faithfulness on the one hand, on the other they were often stereotyped as rude and ungrateful. A character in one of Plautus’s plays comments: “But that’s how some freedmen are: unless one has opposed his patron, he doesn’t consider himself free enough or useful enough or decent enough, unless he’s done this, unless he’s been rude to him, unless he’s been found to be ungrateful to his benefactor” (*Pers.* 838–840 [De Melo]).³³⁵ Gratefulness was of great importance to Roman patrons, for they viewed manumission as a gift graciously extended to the slave, whether the slave paid for his or her manumission or not: for it was always the choice of the owner to offer manumission.³³⁶ The freedperson was never considered on equal footing with the freeborn person and could never leave behind the negative stereotypes. A. M. Duff concludes that “nothing, not the most unselfish patriotism, not the most enlightened public spirit, not the possession of new-won wealth, not even the friendship and confidence of an emperor, could wipe out the original stain of slavery.”³³⁷

The relationship between patron and freedperson was a key factor in the extent of freedom the freed slave experienced, but what exactly that relationship was is debated among scholars. Richard Alston, sharing the view of most Roman historians, asserts that “most freedmen remained dependent” upon their patrons,³³⁸ while Peter Garnsey, challenging that view, concludes

333 Duff, *Freedmen*, 56.

334 See also *Epigr.* 10.27, 11.12.

335 There is evidence that patrons considered ungratefulness among freedpersons a problem. The law addressed the problem (*Dig.* 37.14.1, 7, 19), and during Nero’s reign the Senate debated allowing a patron to revoke manumission for an ungrateful freedperson (Tac., *Ann.* 13.26–27).

336 Rosemary Brana-Shute, “Manumission,” in *A Historical Guide to World Slavery*, ed. Seymour Drescher and Stanley L. Engerman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 260–61; Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 159.

337 Duff, *Freedmen*, 50.

338 Richard Alston, *Aspects of Roman History, 31 BC–AD 117*, 2nd ed., *Aspects of Classical Civilisation* (London: Routledge, 2014), 295.

“that a sizeable number of freedmen attained a position of independence.”³³⁹ The ancient sources never distinguish between dependent and independent freedpersons,³⁴⁰ so these terms are a modern conception of the patron/freedperson relationship. The law did not tightly control this relationship. The owner decided whether to manumit the slave informally or formally and if the slave would pay a release price or be subject to *operae*. Once the slave was manumitted, the patron decided if the now freedperson was duly faithful and grateful and offering the socially expected obligation of *obsequium* (defined as dutiful conduct, *Dig.* 1.7.17.3).³⁴¹ Garnsey notes that “in practice the patron was free to frame his own definition of a freedman’s responsibilities to him, subject to the possibility of legal challenge. But the rules governing their relationship were moral rules.”³⁴²

We find evidence in the sources for both dependent and independent freedpersons. On the one hand, there is evidence that sometimes upon manumission, not much changed in the freedperson’s life. This evidence appears to support the idea that many freedpersons remained in a dependent relationship with their former owner. First, they could remain living in the same house with their patron.³⁴³ In describing one of his villas, Pliny mentions there were rooms for his slaves and freedmen (*Ep.* 2.17.9).³⁴⁴ The law code allowed freedpersons to live with their patrons in homes they inherited (*Dig.* 7.8.2.1, 7.8.6).

Second, freedpersons were often buried in the patron’s household tomb.³⁴⁵ The funerary inscriptions in *ILS* alone provide over a hundred examples of the phrase *libertis libertabusque posterisque eorum* (freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants) or something similar.³⁴⁶ Such allowance provided the freedpersons a burial space and guaranteed the patron additional persons who were invested in maintaining the household tomb.³⁴⁷ But this would also likely

339 Peter Garnsey, “Independent Freedmen and the Economy of Roman Italy under the Principate,” in *Cities, Peasants and Food in Classical Antiquity: Essays in Social and Economic History*, ed. Peter Garnsey and Walter Scheidel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 39.

340 John H. D’Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 144; Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 246.

341 For an exploration of *obsequium* see Buckland, *Roman Law*, 89–90; Duff, *Freedmen*, 39.

342 Garnsey, “Independent Freedmen,” 36.

343 Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 149; Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen*, 71; Wallace-Hadrill, *Pompeii and Herculaneum*, 44, 105–106.

344 See also *Ep.* 9.24.

345 Alston, *Aspects of Roman History*, 295; Duff, *Freedmen*, 100.

346 See also Champlin, *Final Judgments*, 176 and n31. Ulpian later comments that only those freedpersons who were heirs could be buried in the household tomb, even if that phrase was present (*Dig.* 11.7.6). See Duff, *Freedmen*, 100.

347 Champlin, *Final Judgments*, 176.

require the freedpersons to remain in the area, if they did not reside in the household itself.

Third, there is evidence that many freedpersons remained closely involved with their patron. In Cicero's letters, freedpersons were at the bid and call of their patrons. Freedpersons were their emissaries, both business and personal.³⁴⁸ They were of continuing service, as Cicero tells Tiro, "Your services to me are beyond count—in my home and out of it, in Rome and abroad, in private affairs and public, in my studies and literary work" (*Amic.* 123.3 [Bailey]).³⁴⁹ Pliny assumed freedpersons attended their patrons in their activities. He mentions a dinner where the host provided better food for some guests than for others: "One lot was intended for himself and for us, another for his lesser friends (all his friends are graded) and the third for his and our freedmen" (*Ep.* 2.6.2 [Radice]). He also speaks of "all the pleasant services I receive from Zosimus," one of his freedmen (*Ep.* 5.19 [Radice]).³⁵⁰ Seneca even speaks of freedpersons attending their patrons in the afterworld (*Apol.* 13.2–6, 20–23). Cicero wrote in the early first century BCE and Pliny in the late first century CE, so there appears little change between the late Republic and the Principate, at least for some, of freedpersons living with and/or continuing to attend their patrons.

Fourth, freedpersons may have remained with or near their patrons in order to stay with a *contubernalis* or children who were still slaves in the patron's household. The funerary inscriptions in the *columbaria* of the Volusii and the Statilii households in Rome suggest "that 40 per cent of marriages within the *familia* were between slaves and freed, while 45 per cent of freed parents had enslaved children."³⁵¹ If a freedperson had a *contubernalis* or child they desired to see freed someday, this relationship allowed the patron the opportunity to continue exploiting the freedperson.

Finally, Rome itself placed significant value upon the ongoing patron/freedperson relationship as a "means of social integration and social control."³⁵² For Roman manumission was not just an act performed by an owner for a slave,

348 *Amic.* 64.1–2; 72.1; 84.10; 184; 185.1–2; 281.2; 304; 350.1.

349 See also *Amic.* 125.1–2; 147; 220. Tiro eventually purchased his own country estate (*Amic.* 337.7), but even this acquisition was not truly his own, as Cicero junior tells him that "I know you have bought the place to share with us" (337.7 [Bailey]). In all likelihood he not only shared it in life but in death as Cicero's family probably inherited much if not all of Tiro's estate upon his death.

350 For other references to freedpersons continuing to serve their patrons and accompany them see Juv., *Sat.* 5.24–32, 6.135–148; Mart., *Epigr.* 3.46; Pliny, *Ep.* 7.24.4–7, 9.34.1–2; Sall., *Bell. Cat.* 50.1–2, 59.3; Tac., *Ann.* 2.31, 3.15, 4.6, 15.45; *Hist.* 4.59.

351 Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 152.

352 Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 19.

but it had implications for Roman society at large since some freedpersons became citizens in the process.³⁵³

There is also evidence, however, of freedpersons who either had no patron (due to testamentary manumission or the exile of their patron) or who had much more independence from a living patron. Slaves set free in their owners' wills had no patron to whom they owed respect and gratefulness and were not required to share their estate upon their own death with their patron and his or her family.³⁵⁴ Although it was rare, a slave manumitted by will could also be designated heir, thereby not only achieving freedom but receiving the owner's estate as well (*Dig.* 28.5.86).³⁵⁵ It was more common for a freedperson to be named heir;³⁵⁶ these freedpersons would then be completely free from any obligation, socially and financially, to a patron.

Freedpersons who had a patron who was still living could also experience a range of social and financial freedoms from their patrons. The law code stipulated that patrons could not require freedpersons to live with them (*Cod. Iust.* 6.3.12) and, in one case, allowed a freedman of a clothing merchant to engage in the same business in the same community without the permission of his patron (*Dig.* 38.1.45).³⁵⁷ The code also gave the example of two freedmen who had a partnership with each other that did not involve their patron (*Dig.* 17.2.71).³⁵⁸ While it is debated how much social reality can be found in the *Satyricon*, scholars who study the novel note that none of the freedpersons in this novel have patrons. Mouritsen concludes that this "isolated libertine community" was a "literary invention."³⁵⁹ John D'Arms, on the other hand, asserts that "the independent freedman was not as exceptional as he has sometimes been made to appear."³⁶⁰ Garnsey points out that the epigraphical evidence often lacks status markers and therefore freedpersons involved in trade or business are found without any mention of patrons.³⁶¹ He argues that instead of seeing a hidden patron behind these freedpersons, they instead were "exercising at least de facto independence."³⁶² The legal evidence lends support that such independent freedpersons did exist.

353 Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*, 4–5.

354 Champlin, *Final Judgments*, 139.

355 *Ibid.*, 137–38.

356 *Ibid.*

357 Garnsey, "Independent Freedmen," 36.

358 *Ibid.*

359 Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 292.

360 D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome*, 146.

361 Peter Garnsey, "Grain for Rome," in *Trade in the Ancient Economy*, ed. Peter Garnsey, Keith Hopkins, and C. R. Whittaker (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 129.

362 *Ibid.*

In the final analysis, we find evidence for both dependent and independent freedpersons. While many manumitted slaves may have remained dependent upon their patrons, there were certainly others—more than have sometimes been acknowledged—who were clearly independent.

One category of freedpersons not yet discussed is that of the imperial freedmen. These freedmen were part of the *familia* of the emperor and were often trusted counselors. Due to the positions they could hold in the administration and “the complete absence of responsibility to anyone but Caesar,” they often had great influence, power, and wealth.³⁶³ Pliny the Younger asserts that “most of the emperors, though masters of their subjects, were the slaves of their freedmen, at the mercy of their counsels and their whims. Through them they spoke and were spoken to; through them priesthoods, prefectures and consulships were sought” (*Pan.* 88.1 [Radice]).³⁶⁴ Suetonius notes the great wealth of two of Claudius’s most powerful freedmen, Narcissus and Pallas: “[Claudius] permitted them to amass such wealth by plunder, that when he once complained of the low state of his funds, the witty answer was made that he would have enough and to spare, if he were taken into partnership by his two freedmen” (*Claud.*, 28 [Rolfe]). Imperial slaves, however, had much less chance of being manumitted before the age of thirty,³⁶⁵ and their close relationship with the Emperor was a double-edged sword as he could easily punish or kill them.³⁶⁶ Imperial freedmen were also often resented and despised.³⁶⁷

In summary, informally manumitted slaves freed after the *lex Junia* and all formally freed slaves were no longer owned by another person(s). They could

363 Duff, *Freedmen*, 157. Duff chronicles the emperors and their powerful freedmen (pp. 175–82). See also Pliny, *Ep.* 10.27, 10.28, 10.63, 10.84; Tac., *Hist.* 3.58. To further explore imperial freedmen see especially Weaver, *The Emperor’s Freedmen and Slaves*.

364 Pliny goes on to say to Trajan, “By contrast, you hold your freedmen in high honour, but as freedmen only, and believe that a reputation for honesty and good character is all they should expect, for you know that the chief indication of weakness in a ruler is the power of his freedmen.” While Pliny gave this speech in gratitude to and praise of Trajan, Radice notes that it “is no idle flattery in conventional form; it is rather a sort of manifesto of the Senate’s ideal of a constitutional ruler.” Betty Radice, “Pliny and the ‘Panegyricus,’” *GR* 15, no. 2 (1968): 168. But even if Pliny could be accused of flattering Trajan here, there is little question that he held in contempt the past emperors’ relationships with their freedmen (see also *Ep.* 8.6). It is worth noting that Pliny is expressing the view of an elite Roman statesman; we have little knowledge if the common Roman person shared this same contempt.

365 Weaver, *The Emperor’s Freedmen and Slaves*, 100.

366 Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 124; Suet., *Aug.* 67.2, *Nero*, 35.5.

367 Mart., *Epigr.* 2.32; Pliny, *Ep.* 8.6; Tac., *Hist.* 1.76.

legally marry and have legitimate children,³⁶⁸ and they had property rights. Formally freed slaves became Roman citizens and could create a will, passing on at least a portion of their estate to heirs of their choice.

Roman freedpersons, however, suffered a number of liabilities and disadvantages. If they were informally freed before the *lex Junia*, while they could not be forced to work, legally they were still slaves. Freedpersons informally freed after the *lex Junia* were no longer slaves, but they did not become Roman citizens; and when they died their estate reverted back to the patron and his or her family. Formally manumitted freedpersons became Roman citizens and could control their estate at death to some extent, but they were barred from the Senate and *equites* and from serving as judges, magistrates, and decurions. Freedpersons were still answerable with their bodies in that they could be examined under torture. Freedwomen could not refuse to marry their patron or divorce him. They also had to name their patron as their *tutela legitima*, and their patron inherited a part of their estate even when they could create a will apart from the patron's approval. Freedpersons, forever bearing the stain of slavery, were never considered as equals with freeborn persons, and they were often thought of as rude and ungrateful. Some freedpersons were independent from their patrons either because they were freed by testament or because their patrons allowed them such independence. Other freedpersons, however, continued to live almost the same way they lived before manumission, performing many of the same services and continuing to live with their patron. These freedpersons may have often had *contubernales* and children who remained as slaves in the household, allowing the patron the opportunity to continue to exploit the freedperson/patron relationship.

2.5 *Benefits of Manumission*

We come again to the question of why these slaves paid the price they did to achieve a circumscribed freedom. Why did some slaves work so long and hard to acquire the necessary funds? Why would they pay money for informal manumission, only to begin the process again for formal manumission? Why did some slaves sacrifice so much only to remain in the same home with their patrons, doing much of the same work?

368 Legitimate children are those children born from a legal marriage. Since *contubernium* was not a legal marriage, children from these unions were considered illegitimate. See Rawson, "Roman Concubinage and Other De Facto Marriages," 283n15. In addition, children born of a slave woman were the property of the slave's owner. See Beryl Rawson, "Family Life among the Lower Classes at Rome in the First Two Centuries of the Empire," *CP* 61, no. 2 (1966): 72.

We have already discussed some benefits of manumission, such as no longer being owned by another person, freedom from sexual exploitation and most bodily punishment, legal marriage and legitimate children, and the ability to own property. Slaves manumitted formally also became Roman citizens and gained some control over distributing their estate upon their death. All of these benefits are significant.

But as mentioned before, what slavery destroys is human dignity. As Bradley states it, “the contrast between free and slave was thus a contrast between person and non-person.”³⁶⁹ We noted earlier that while the Greeks and Romans did not speak of the modern concept of human dignity,³⁷⁰ they did speak of a person’s honor which indicated a person’s worth. And, again, the primary distinction between the modern concept of human dignity and first-century honor is that honor was not considered inherent to a person. Roman slaves, just as their Greek counterparts, had no honor.³⁷¹ The law categorized slaves as property (Gaius 2.13), and they were bought and sold as such. There was no regard for children or family affiliation at the auction block. Keith Bradley investigated records of slave sales from Egypt from the first century BCE to the fourth century CE, and only a few records showed young children being sold with their mother. Females were sold individually as young as four and males as young as two.³⁷² But the law went even further by animalizing slaves. Gaius writes that the *lex Aquilia* “treats equally our slaves and our four-footed cattle” (*Dig.* 9.2.2.2).³⁷³ Slaves were sold and inspected with no regard to their personhood. Seneca comments, “When you buy a horse, you order its blanket to be removed; you pull off the garments from slaves that are advertised for sale, so that no bodily flaws may escape your notice” (*Ep.* 80.9 [Gummere]). For a woman slave, it could be even more humiliating. Publius Vinicus described one female slave as “she stood naked on the shore to meet the buyer’s sneers; every part of her body was inspected—and handled” (Sen., *Controv.* 1.2.3 [Winterbottom]).³⁷⁴ The Romans believed slavery stained a person in such a way that they were marked as different and other, and their “nature was associated with treachery,

369 Keith R. Bradley, “The Regular, Daily Traffic in Slaves: Roman History and Contemporary History,” *CJ* 87, no. 2 (1991): 137. See also page 129.

370 The Romans did have the term *dignitas*, which Glancy explains as “a peculiar combination of birth, character, virtues, access to power, material resources, and legal status.” Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 27. Thus, the concept of *dignitas* is even narrower than that of honor, but like honor was not considered inherent to people.

371 For a cogent discussion of Roman slaves and their lack of honor and *dignitas*, see *ibid.*, 27–29.

372 Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 53–57.

373 As referenced in Perry, *The Roman Freedwoman*, 175n57.

374 As referenced in Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 86.

cruelty, mendacity, greed, cowardice, and criminality.”³⁷⁵ While manumission did not remove this stain from a slave, it did enable a freed slave to become a person who had the potential to gain honor and to be socially recognized as a person with honor. Perhaps what drove these slaves to pay the high cost they did for manumission was that in doing so, they could become persons of honor and worth—they could have human dignity.

2.6 *Geographical Areas Where Roman Manumission Took Place*

Roman citizens could informally manumit their slaves anywhere within the Roman empire since the administration was not involved in these types of manumissions. The only three extant records of informal manumissions are from Egypt.³⁷⁶ Citizens could also manumit slaves by *testamento* anywhere in the empire, although the only extant wills we have come from Rome³⁷⁷ and Egypt.³⁷⁸ As discussed earlier, manumission by *censu* only took place during the Republic and only at Rome. Manumission by *vindicta* required the presence of a Roman magistrate; such persons might be more difficult to find outside of Rome,³⁷⁹ but they were available.

2.7 *Summary: The Circumscribed Freedom of a Roman Freedperson*

A slave who was freed under the Roman manumission system could be freed by the state or by his or her owner. The state manumitted slaves as a reward for service or for information involving the murder of their master. Slaves freed by these means would be independent freedpersons as they had no patron with whom they remained in relationship. An owner could free a slave informally *per epistulam*, *per mensam*, or *inter amicos*, or they could manumit a slave formally by *censu*, *vindicta*, or *testamento*.³⁸⁰ Slaves freed by *testamento* had no continuing relationship with a patron, but most slaves freed by other means remained in some kind of ongoing relationship with their former owner. Most Roman slaves likely paid a significant monetary price for their freedom. Others

375 Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 19.

376 All three are manumission by *inter amicos*: *MChrest.* 2.362 (212 CE); *P. Lips.* 2.151 (246–267 CE); *P. Oxy.* 1205 (291 CE).

377 *CIL* 6.10229 (108 CE) found on the Appian way.

378 *P. Hamb.* 1.72 = *CPL* 174 (100–299 CE); *CPL* 221 (142 CE); *P. Oxy.* 474 = Hunt and Edgar, *Select Papyri*, 84 (156–65 CE); *FIRA*² III 50 = Hunt and Edgar, *Select Papyri*, 85 (189–194 CE); *PSI* 1040 (200–299 CE); *P. Oxy.* 2474 (275–299 CE).

379 See Pliny, *Ep.* 7.16 where Pliny promises to arrange for a magistrate to change his travel plans in order to provide for a manumission *vindicta* in Gallia Cisalpina (an area north-west of Italy).

380 As previously noted, manumission by *censu* was no longer practiced in the first century CE, and *per epistulam* and *per mensam* were probably not practiced until after the first century CE.

were required to offer *operae*, and those freed by *testamento* often had stipulations to meet before they received their freedom. Some women achieved freedom by providing children for their owners, and others obtained freedom through a (sometimes non-consensual) marriage with their patron. Freedom for Roman slaves was rarely a gift offered freely by their owners—it was a costly acquirement.

Once manumitted, a Roman freedperson usually gained only circumscribed freedom. Those slaves freed informally before the *lex Junia* legally remained slaves; after this law was enacted, such slaves gained their freedom, the ability to marry and have legitimate children, but they did not receive citizenship or the right to create a will. Those freed formally received both citizenship and the right to control at least a portion of their estate upon their death. But Roman freedpersons never gained equal footing with freeborn persons, as they were always marked with the stain of slavery. Like slaves, freedpersons in some circumstances could still be examined under torture. They could not become a senator or *equites* or serve as a judge, magistrate, or decurion. Freedwomen could not refuse to marry their patron or divorce him; if they were not married to him, they had to name him as their *tutela legitima*, and their patron always inherited a portion of their estate. As long as their patron lived, freedpersons owed him or her *obsequium*—ongoing loyalty and gratitude for the gift of freedom bestowed. Many freedpersons left *contubernales* and children behind in slavery, and this likely influenced them to remain near, if not in, their patron's household.

These liabilities and disadvantages, however, did not keep these slaves from paying a high cost for their circumscribed freedom. Upon manumission, they could own property, legally marry and have legitimate children. Formally freed slaves became Roman citizens and could pass at least part of their estates to their own heirs. But perhaps the greatest motivation for—and benefit of—achieving manumission may have been that when slaves received their freedom, they became persons who could have honor and worth—persons with human dignity.

3 The Circumscribed Freedom of Greek and Roman Freedpersons Compared

In some respects, Roman freedpersons could achieve a greater extent of freedom than Greek freedpersons. Both Greek and Roman freed slaves were no longer owned by another person, they could own property, and they could legally marry and have legitimate children. But formally manumitted Roman freedpersons acquired citizenship, unlike Greek freedpersons or informally

manumitted Roman freedpersons. Because they were not citizens, Greek freed slaves were required to pay the *metoikion* tax and perhaps an additional freedperson tax. Greek freedpersons, both male and female, had to register their former owner as their *prostatēs*—only Roman freedwomen were required to name their patron their *tutela legitima*. The freedom of Greek freedpersons appears fragile since it could be challenged. While the Roman Senate debated reenslaving ungrateful freedpersons, such legislation never passed. Therefore, evidence suggests that the freedom of Roman freedpersons was more secure than that of Greek freedpersons.

Greek freedpersons, however, generally had less obligation to their former owners than their Roman counterparts. Only in Calymna and perhaps Athens did there appear to be an ongoing relationship between the Greek freedperson and his or her former owner. Some have argued that *paramone* was an example of such a relationship, but the evidence supports the view that a slave performed *paramone*, not a freedperson. So, once *paramone* was completed, the slave was manumitted and there were no further obligations. If the freedperson left a “spouse” or children behind in slavery, however, they may have remained near their former owner in order to maintain those relationships and to perhaps someday free one or two. Roman freedpersons, while not required to live with their patron, apparently often did. They also often continued to provide many of the same services they provided as slaves, such as being a scribe, envoy, business representative, and such. One reason posited was that these slaves were freed informally and were now working to earn the favor of their patron to free them formally. Or, like the Greek freed slaves, they may also have stayed in or near the household of their patron because they had *contubernales* or children who remained as slaves in that household. The desire to be freed formally and the desire to see other family members manumitted allowed the patron the opportunity to continue exploiting these freedpersons. While some owners may have freed their slaves out of benevolence, the Roman patron/freedperson relationship often involved continued exploitation, rendered financial benefit to the patron, and provided Rome the social control it desired.

Most Greek and Roman freed slaves paid a release price for their freedom, and it was usually quite high. The evidence exists, but is sparse, for slaves receiving manumission at no cost to themselves. In addition to a release price, Roman slaves had to pay a manumission tax, if their owners did not pay it for them, and in many cities Greek slaves had to pay a fee to register and publicize their manumission. Some Roman and Greek slave women achieved their freedom by providing children for their manumitter, but this arrangement was

much more common in Greek manumissions. Roman freedwomen sometimes were required to marry their patrons and could not divorce them. Many Greek slaves, in addition to paying a release price, had to render *paramone* services in order to acquire their freedom, which often included serving their owner or the owner's children until such persons died. Similarly, Roman slaves freed by *testamento* often had stipulations they had to meet before they received their freedom—these too could include extended service. The cost of freedom for both Greek and Roman slaves, especially women, was considerable. Freedom was rarely simply given to these slaves. The price was high and the freedom incomplete, suggesting to me that what these slaves sought and valued above all else was to be persons of honor—to have human dignity.³⁸¹

4 Manumission Practices in Galatia

Our final consideration is which manumission system, Greek or Roman, would have been followed in the area of the Galatian churches, or if both would have been practiced.³⁸² When Augustus formed the Roman province of Galatia in 25 BCE, it originally consisted of the territory occupied by the three Galatian, or Celtic, tribes in Asia Minor.³⁸³ The Roman road, *Via Sebaste*, was completed in 6 BCE and ran east and west from Pisidian Antioch through the southern part of Asia Minor.³⁸⁴ The regions of Paphlagonia and Phazimonitis were added to the province in 5 BCE, and a part of the region of Pontus was added in

381 And we must acknowledge yet again that the majority of slaves were never freed; they never achieved the freedom and dignity for which they longed. This failure makes the proclamation of freedom in Galatians even more significant.

382 Debate continues as to where exactly these churches were located: whether they were located in the northern area of the Celtic (Galatian) tribes or whether they were in the southern area of the Roman province of Galatia. However, the specific location of these churches within central Asia Minor does not directly inform this study.

383 Karl Strobel, "The Galatians in the Roman Empire: Historical Tradition and Ethnic Identity in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor," in *Ethnic Constructs in Antiquity: The Role of Power and Tradition*, ed. Ton Derks and Nico Roymans, vol. 13 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 119.

384 William M. Ramsay, "Colonia Caesarea (Pisidian Antioch) in the Augustan Age," *JRS* 6 (1916): 87–88.

2 BCE.³⁸⁵ Territory continued to be added until 69 CE.³⁸⁶ Both Pisidian Antioch and Lystra, cities visited by Paul according to Luke's account (Acts 13:14, 14:6), were colonies, with Antioch being the administrative and military center of the province.³⁸⁷ J. Albert Harrill notes that "the urban populations of the annexed territories collectively called 'Galatia' experienced a high degree of Romanization."³⁸⁸ There would have been Roman citizens in the colonies, and some of these likely manumitted their slaves informally. For those who desired to manumit their slaves formally, there would have been Roman magistrates available to enable them to do so. In addition, there is epigraphical evidence of Roman freedpersons in the area.³⁸⁹ So, while the local populations may not have followed the informal Roman manumission practices and could not have formally manumitted their slaves (only Roman citizens could do so),³⁹⁰ it is likely that they were at least familiar with these practices.

But what were the local manumission practices in Asia Minor? Although the Celts had settled in the area in the early third century BCE,³⁹¹ the Greeks had migrated to the western coast of Asia Minor beginning in 1000 BCE and had a continued and highly influential presence.³⁹² The Celtic language remained in use in much of the province of Galatia until late antiquity, but the written language was Greek.³⁹³ William Ramsay notes that the Roman personnel who moved into the area had to learn Greek since it "was the language of education for the whole of central Anatolia as well as the familiar speech of almost all the coast-lands."³⁹⁴ While the local populations spoke the Greek language,

385 Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, 465–66. Magie notes that "with these additions on the north and the northeast, the area of the Galatian province, now extending across Asia Minor from the mountain-range bordering the Euxine coast to the crest of the Taurus—and perhaps even further south—was about equal to that of the province of Asia and more than twice the size of Bithynia" (p. 466).

386 Ramsay, "Colonia Caesarea (Pisidian Antioch)," 93.

387 Ibid., 84, 87. Magie mentions five other military colonies in the province of Galatia in Pisidia alone. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, 462.

388 J. Albert Harrill, "Coming of Age and Putting on Christ: The *Toga Virilis* Ceremony, Its Paraenesis, and Paul's Interpretation of Baptism in Galatians," *NovT* 44, no. 3 (2002): 263.

389 For example, *CIL* 3.6830; Ramsay also notes an epitaph dedicated by a freedman. For discussion on both see Ramsay, "Colonia Caesarea (Pisidian Antioch)," 90–91, 96.

390 Individuals among the local populations could be granted citizenship, but this was the exception. For requests of citizenships, see Pliny *Ep.* 10.5.1–2, 10.6.1–2, 10.11.1–2. Paul provides another example of someone (apparently his father, since Paul was born a citizen) being granted Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25–28).

391 Strobel, "The Galatians in the Roman Empire," 117.

392 Douglas A. Howard, *The History of Turkey* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001), 26–28.

393 Strobel, "The Galatians in the Roman Empire," 128.

394 Ramsay, "Colonia Caesarea (Pisidian Antioch)," 100–101.

did they follow Greek manumission practices? As previously discussed, in the Bosporan region on the north shore of the Black Sea, there are Greek manumission inscriptions dating from the first through the third century CE. The Jews who created these inscriptions obviously shared a different cultural heritage than the local population, and yet they practiced Greek manumission. The island of Calymna, just off the southwest coast of Asia Minor, is also a site of many Greek manumission inscriptions from the first century CE. There is a Greek manumission record on a funerary altar from Pisidia dated to 212 CE (*SEG* 47.1777). There is also a Greek manumission record in Hyrcania, southeast of the Caspian Sea in modern Iran, dated to the early third century BCE (*SEG* 20.325). So, we have evidence of Greek manumission practices stretching from the Aegean Islands eastward to Persia and north to the Black Sea. With the exception of the record in Hyrcania, the inscriptions are dated after the Roman occupation of Asia Minor and are thus evidence that Greek manumission practices were ongoing in this area of the Roman empire. Even though the material record is sparse, it does suggest that the local populations of Asia Minor were familiar with Greek manumission practices during the first century CE.

There is evidence then that those who lived in Asia Minor—and in the province of Galatia in particular—during the first century CE could have been familiar with both the Roman and Greek manumission practices. Until 212 CE most of those who lived in Asia Minor were not Roman citizens, and so they could not manumit their slaves by formal Roman manumission. The Greek culture had long influenced this region, and so it is likely that many in Asia Minor manumitted their slaves using the Greek manumission practices. The freedpersons in the Galatian churches then could have been manumitted under either system. Therefore, in chapter 4, when exploring how a freedperson would have understood Paul's proclamation of freedom in Gal 5:1, it will be important to keep in mind the two different manumission systems.

Views of Freedom in the Ancient Mediterranean World

Many scholars argue that freedom is the central theme in Paul's letter to the Galatian churches.¹ Hans Dieter Betz states that “ἐλευθερία ... is the central theological concept that sums up the Christian's situation before God as well as in this world. It is the basic concept underlying Paul's argument throughout the letter.”² If freedom is indeed central to Paul's argument in Galatians, it behooves us to consider exactly how Paul understood this concept. Three cultures—Greek, Roman, and Jewish—had the potential to influence Paul's concept of freedom. In this chapter, I will explore how ancient people from each of these cultures might have understood freedom. In the final section, I will note the similarities and differences between the three world views and then make some observations on Paul's concept of freedom in light of these views.

1 Greek Concepts of Freedom

Everyone who takes on the challenging task of exploring the topic of Greek freedom begins with a goal in mind, and that goal necessarily determines the direction and method of their investigation. Dieter Nestle sought to understand

1 C. K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985); Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1979), 32, 255; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1993), 260; Don Garlington, *An Exposition of Galatians: A Reading from the New Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 291–93; Timothy George, *Galatians*, NAC (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 352; G. Walter Hansen, “Paul's Conversion and His Ethic of Freedom in Galatians,” in *The Road from Damascus: The Impact of Paul's Conversion on His Life, Thought, and Ministry*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 223; William M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1900; reprint, Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock, 1978), 441–42; Samuel Vollenweider, *Freiheit als neue Schöpfung: Eine Untersuchung zur Eleutheria bei Paulus und in seiner Umwelt*, FRLANT 147 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 285.

2 Betz, *Galatians*, 255.

how the Greek word group for “freedom” developed and advanced. He pursued this goal by tracing the development of ἐλεύθερος and its derivatives through a few select ancient Greek authors: Homer, Solon, Pindar, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus.³ Max Pohlenz had a broader goal of the historical development of the idea of freedom among the Greeks. He traced the concept of freedom through the different Greek eras: Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic. As he explored each era, he distinguished different types of freedom, and then examined Greek authors who spoke of each type.⁴ Kurt Raaflaub also set out to explore the development of the concept of Greek freedom, but he was particularly interested in the origin and development of political freedom. Due to this focus, he used a broader philological approach than Nestle, including Greek terms such as αὐτονομία, αὐτάρχεια, and ἰσηγορία. He studied the authors of the Archaic and Classical eras, with an eye on the social as well as the political context.⁵ Orlando Patterson sought to determine how freedom developed into the ideal it is today and why it originally emerged as a social value. He examined more than the ancient Greek sources, tracing the concept through the ancient non-western world, then Greece, Rome and medieval Europe.⁶ These authors, and others, have explored the concept and development of Greek freedom, but their goals directed their methods and outcomes.

My goal here is not to explore again the development of freedom terminology or a specific type of freedom. The goal instead is to attempt to determine how an ancient Greek would have conceived of freedom, recognizing that a person’s status and location would influence his or her perception of freedom. Just as today, there would be no single idea of freedom. M. I. Finley comments that “men have for centuries exercised their minds in vain to find a workable definition of ‘freedom’.... I do not believe the term to be definable in any normal sense of the word ‘definition.’”⁷ So here I set out not in search of

3 Dieter Nestle, *Eleutheria. Studien zum Wesen der Freiheit bei den Griechen und im Neuen Testament*, HUT 6 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967).

4 Max Pohlenz, *Freedom in Greek Life and Thought*, trans. Carl Lofmark (New York: Humanities Press, 1966).

5 Kurt Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*, trans. Renate Franciscono (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

6 Orlando Patterson, *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

7 M. I. Finley, Brent D. Shaw, and Richard P. Saller, *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (New York: Viking, 1982), 77. Patterson says rather poetically that “freedom, like love and beauty, is one of those values better experienced than defined.” Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 1. Westermann looks at the Delphi manumission inscriptions, however, and finds a definition of freedom: “To the Delphic priests ... individual liberty consisted of the possession of four freedoms—status, personal inviolability, freedom of economic activity, right of unrestricted

a definition of freedom from a Greek viewpoint, but in search of the range of ideas that freedom would invoke for an ancient Greek.

My method is to explore the archaic and classical Greek literature (800–323 BCE)⁸ by genre rather than era. Since I am interested in the various conceptions of freedom rather than their development, examining the literature by genre provides the opportunity to consider the unique presentation of ideas that each genre offers: a Greek playwright presents concepts and ideas differently than a Greek historian. This approach encourages careful listening to each author. I will explore literature from selected Greek poets, playwrights, historians, and philosophers who were highly regarded by ancient Greeks and for whom we have an adequate number of extant works to study.⁹ This survey does not include all possible genres nor is it an exhaustive search within the selected ones, but it seeks to be representative enough to discover the variety of conceptions of freedom expressed by ancient Greeks. While a concept can be present without particular terminology,¹⁰ I will primarily focus on the use and context of the Greek word for “free,” ἐλεύθερος and its derivatives.¹¹

It is important to note at the start that some voices will simply not be heard: our literary sources from ancient Greece are written by predominantly high-status male authors. Sometimes, however, the views of lower status

movement.” William L. Westermann, “Between Slavery and Freedom,” *AHR* 50, no. 2 (1945): 216. Finley argues against Westermann, asserting that “these inscriptions had one purpose, and one only, to give public notice of a formal act which changed the status of an individual (or individuals). It was not their function, or aim, to offer a juristic treatise on freedom.” Finley, Shaw, and Saller, *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece*, 146.

8 Hellenistic Greece, while still influential, saw the end of the Greek city-states, the amalgamation of Greek culture with surrounding cultures, and ultimately the dominance of Rome. Raaflaub asserts that by the end of the fifth century BCE, “the spectrum of meanings and functions of freedom in both the individual-private and public-political spheres was, with few exceptions, fully developed.” Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom*, 18. Hellenistic Greece gave rise to the Stoics, Epicureans, and Cynics, but since it is the Romanized versions of these philosophies that influenced those who lived in the first century CE, I will explore these philosophies in the next section.

9 The choice of particular authors will be explained below in each section.

10 Contra Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom*, 42.

11 Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz notes a “surprising fact” that the Greeks “had only one term to define freedom and the free person (ἐλευθερία, ἐλεύθερος/α)” while they had at least eight terms for slaves. Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free: The Concept of Manumission and the Status of Manumitted Slaves in the Ancient Greek World* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 27. We tend to use the English terms “freedom” and “liberty” interchangeably, and as far as common usage, there is little difference between the two. (See, however, Hanna F. Pitkin, “Are Freedom and Liberty Twins?” *PT* 16, no. 4 (1988), who argues that they are indeed different.) I will use the term “freedom” throughout this chapter, but when quoting from other sources who use the term “liberty,” I will leave their term unchanged.

people can be heard through the voices of the elite writers themselves. Orlando Patterson contends that “most of what we know about the common person’s view of the subject comes from writers who despised what ordinary people thought about it. Our best evidence that freedom had become a mass value in late-fifth-century Greece, for example, is the relentless condemnation of popular conceptions of the value by the Greek elite thinkers.”¹² Kurt Raaflaub also cautions us that our sources about Greek freedom are primarily Athenian.¹³ So with these caveats in mind, we will work through a selection of ancient Greek literature, listening to how Greek poets, playwrights, historians, and philosophers talked about the concept of freedom.

1.1 *The Greek Poets*

Homer and Hesiod (eighth or seventh century) were the earliest known Greek poets.¹⁴ The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are attributed to Homer, and Hesiod was the author of two didactic poems, *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. References and allusions to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* found throughout Greek literature attest to Homer’s influence and popularity, but the Greeks highly esteemed Hesiod as well.¹⁵ Pindar (ca. 518–ca. 438) was considered the greatest lyric poet¹⁶ and wrote a variety of commissioned hymns, *encomia* (speeches praising a person), and victory odes for athletes.

1.1.1 Homer

Homer rarely mentions freedom. In the *Iliad*, the idea of freedom only occurs on five occasions—four of those in relation to slavery.¹⁷ Three of these references are to the possibility or actuality of an enemy taking the women of a city away as spoils of war to be slaves, thus taking away the women’s individual freedom (*Il.* 6.455, 16.831, 20.193). The fourth reference is to Lycaon, the son of the King of Troy. Achilles originally captured him and sent him to Lemnos,

12 Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 2.

13 Raaflaub notes that “Athenian sources predominate so markedly in the surviving material that we can trace the conceptual development of freedom almost only on the basis of Athenian experiences and perspectives.” Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom*, 13.

14 All dates in this section on Greek freedom will be BCE unless otherwise noted.

15 Herodotus 2.53.2; Callimachus, *Epigr.* 29. Koning notes that “at an early stage in Greek history, Hesiod and Homer achieved canonical status.” Hugo H. Koning, *Hesiod, the Other Poet: Ancient Reception of a Cultural Icon* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 8.

16 Quint., *Inst.* 10.1.61; see also Horace, *Epod.* 4.2. Beye asserts that Pindar’s “celebrity during his lifetime was unmatched by any other ancient poet.” Charles Rowan Beye, *Ancient Greek Literature and Society*, 2nd, rev. ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 83.

17 All lexical searches in the Greek sources were done through *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, (TLG), <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu>.

where he was sold as a slave (*Il.* 21.40–41). Another man then paid a high price to ransom him (*Il.* 21.42). Lycaon later tells Achilles, “I fetched you the price of one hundred oxen. Now I have bought my freedom by paying three times as much” (*Il.* 21.79–83 [Wyatt]).¹⁸ In all four of these examples, both women and men face either the possibility or reality of becoming slaves in the context of war, thus losing their individual freedom.¹⁹ The fifth reference is to state freedom. Hector comments that if Zeus grants the Trojans victory, they will offer a libation of thanksgiving to the gods in gratitude for their freedom (*Il.* 6.527–28).²⁰

The *Odyssey* does not speak of freedom, but even this earliest of literature presents slavery—the loss of freedom—as dishonorable: “Zeus, whose voice is borne afar, takes away half his worth from a man, when the day of slavery comes upon him” (*Od.* 17.322–23 [Dimock]). The *Odyssey* also presents the idea that freeborn men have a physical bearing that distinguishes them in some way from slaves: “Nor to look at do you seem in any way like a slave either in form or in stature” (*Od.* 24.252–53 [Dimock]).

1.1.2 Hesiod

Hesiod writes from the perspective of the small farmer rather than from that of the elite. While freedom is a rare topic in Homer, it never occurs in Hesiod. However, the concerns of war and its consequences are not Hesiod’s focus either. The lack of any reference to freedom in Hesiod appears to confirm that individual freedom and state freedom were associated with war and its consequences.²¹

18 The Greek term translated here as “freedom” is *λύμην*, not the term *ἐλευθερος*. The context makes it clear, however, that Lycaon was sold as a slave and paid money, apparently through a third party, to buy his freedom back.

19 Patterson, following Finley, asserts that in Homeric times, defeated men were usually put to death rather than enslaved. Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 50–51. Patterson asserts that “freedom began its long journey in the Western consciousness as a woman’s value. It was women who first lived in terror of enslavement, and hence it was women who first came to value its absence.” *Ibid.*, 51. Here Homer speaks, however, without comment of a man being enslaved. Raaflaub also contends that Patterson “seems to ... underestimate the men’s exposure to slavery.” Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom*, 43.

20 Magdalene Stoevesandt et al., *Homer’s Iliad. Book VI* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 182.

21 In addressing Hesiod’s silence regarding freedom and slavery, Raaflaub comments that “war, at least in the extreme forms of conquest and enslavement of cities, was a less troubling and pervasive reality in the experience of Hesiod and his contemporaries than it appears to have been in a somewhat earlier world described by Homer,” and, therefore, “the chances of losing his own freedom and thereby personally experiencing the negative sides of slavery were remote.” Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom*, 40–41.

1.1.3 Pindar

Pindar lived and wrote during the Ionian Revolt and Persian Wars, so it is not surprising that three of his four references to freedom are to state freedom (*Pyth.* 1.60–65, 8.98–100) or the individual freedom that results from state freedom (*Isthm.* 8.11–15). At one point, Pindar speaks of the Hellas being delivered “from grievous slavery” (*Pyth.* 1.72–75 [Race]), thus describing the loss of state freedom as slavery to the controlling nation. In another reference to freedom, Pindar praises a man by saying that he has a “liberal (ἐλευθέρα) spirit” (*Pyth.* 2.57–61 [Race]). Here we see the freedom terminology used to indicate the character associated with a free person, thus taking on a moral connotation.

1.1.4 Summary of the Greek Poets

The Greek poets express limited concepts of freedom, but they often associate freedom and slavery. The poets portray slavery as the loss of individual freedom and individual freedom as dependent upon state freedom. They indicate that there is a moral component to freedom, for positive character traits are associated with free people, and slavery implies a loss of worth. They even imply that freedom can be reflected in a person’s physical appearance.

1.2 *The Greek Playwrights*

Aeschylus (525–456), Sophocles (ca. 496–406), and Euripides (ca. 484–406) were the great classical Greek playwrights known for their tragedies. The Greeks considered Aeschylus the Father of Tragedy.²² After the death of these three, Aristophanes (ca. 450–ca. 380) wrote a scene in his play, *Frogs*: Euripides arrives in Hades and challenges Aeschylus for the Chair of Tragedy, which Sophocles had previously readily conceded to Aeschylus upon his own arrival (755–813). Aristophanes thus gives evidence to how early these three were considered the best tragedians. They wrote and performed their plays during the years of the Ionian Revolt (500–474), the Persian Wars (492–449), and the Peloponnesian War (431–404)—a pivotal time in Greek history.

1.2.1 Aeschylus

Like the poets, Aeschylus writes of both state and individual freedom. Clytemnestra speaks of the defeated people of Troy as being no longer free (*Ag.* 328), Eteocles beseeches the gods to keep his city free and never enslaved (*Sept.* 74–75), and in the *Persians*, a messenger tells of the Greeks encouraging each other to fight for the freedom of homeland and family (402–405). In Aeschylus’s plays, we see the division of slave and free. Electra speaks of people

22 Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 6.11.11.

who are slaves in contrast to those who are free (*Cho.* 103), and Orestes asserts that he is the son of a free father (*Cho.* 915).

Aeschylus, however, also explores freedom of speech (a form of civic freedom), freedom through death, and inner freedom. In one of the later plays, the chorus associates freedom with the idea of being able to speak openly and freely (*Pers.* 591–94). In two plays, death is portrayed as providing a type of freedom. The Furies, as the chorus, assert that there is “not much freedom” after death (*Eum.* 340),²³ but later they comment that death can free a person from the defilement and guilt of misdeeds or crimes (*Eum.* 600–603). And in the *Suppliants*, the Daughters of Danaus wish for death, because “the one who dies is freed from lamentable evils” (802–803). Exploring a type of inner freedom, throughout *Libation-Bearers* the chorus speaks often of freedom from defilement (807–811, 859–65, 1044–47) and the need for purification that only a god can provide (1059–60). And in what was likely Aeschylus’s last play, *Prometheus Bound*, the servant of Zeus says to Hephaestus: “No one is free except Zeus” (*Prom.* 50 [Smyth]). Nonetheless, in this play, even though Prometheus is overpowered, punished, and tortured by Zeus, he refuses to give Zeus the information he most desperately wants to know; Prometheus thus maintains a sort of independence, or inner freedom.

1.2.2 Sophocles

The plays of Sophocles speak primarily of individual freedom. The characters regularly refer to people as free or slave,²⁴ and in many references the lament is of a high-status person who is now a slave due to the circumstances of war.²⁵ In a surprisingly empathetic scene, Sophocles reveals that the plight of the conquered did sometimes impact those they came to serve:

For a strange pity came over me, friends, at the sight of these ill-fated exiles, homeless and fatherless in a foreign land. Though they were once the daughters perhaps of freeborn men, they now live the life of slaves. O Zeus, god who turns the tide of battle, may I never see you stalking against a child of my line on any occasion; no, if you do some such thing, let it not be while I am still alive! So great is my fear, as I look upon these girls. (*Trach.* 298–306 [Jebb])

23 Throughout this chapter, if no translator is noted the translation is my own.

24 *Aj.* 1019–1020, 1259–61; *El.* 967–72; *Trach.* 52–53, 248–50, 453–54.

25 *Aj.* 487–89; *Phil.* 995–96; *Trach.* 301–302.

This passage is particularly striking, for while Sophocles has a woman speaking these lines in his play, he is obviously the author of them. That a high-status male could write these lines in a play performed for the public at large suggests that the loss of individual freedom as a result of war, which led to a life of slavery, was something feared by many, regardless of status. In the context of what would be a century of war, this fear was not unfounded.

In Sophocles, there is also a moral connotation to freedom. As in the poets, there is shame associated with slavery. Heracles is sold into slavery at one point, and he is “stung at having this shame set upon him” (*Trach.* 254 [Lloyd-Jones]). In contrast, there is good character associated with the free, with the free being generous (*Phil.* 1006) and undefiled (*Oed. tyr.* 397).

1.2.3 Euripides

Euripides, like his contemporary Sophocles, speaks of individual freedom and gives evidence that freedom has a moral connotation. His characters often refer to people as slave and free.²⁶ Slavery is viewed as shameful (*Hec.* 374), and there is an indication that this shame remains even after death (*Hec.* 551–52). In a rather contrarian move, there is an assertion that slaves can be morally good. That such a point must even be argued shows that it was an accepted view that slaves, due to their nature and position, were immoral and ignoble. In the play *Ion*, a slave tells his owner, “Only one thing brings shame to slaves, the name. In all else a slave who is valiant is not at all inferior to free men” (854–56 [Kovacs]).²⁷

In addition, Euripides explores what Aeschylus explored before him—the concept of inner freedom. Polyxena has no choice but to be sacrificed, but she can choose to go willingly (*Hec.* 547–551). Hecuba voices the opinion that no one, not even a king, is truly free: “No mortal is free! Either he is the slave of money or fate, or he is prevented by the city’s multitude or its laws from acting as he thinks best” (*Hec.* 864–67 [Kovacs]). In this statement, we see the movement from the typical juxtaposition of external freedom and slavery to one of inner freedom and slavery. In these plays, there are also references to freedom from fear, another type of inner freedom.²⁸

26 *Alc.* 675–78; *Andr.* 12–15, 433–34; *Hec.* 234, 291–92, 420; *Hipp.* 419–23; *Orest.* 1169–70; *Phoen.* 999–1001; *Tro.* 298–305.

27 In another play, a slave comments: “Even if I am a slave, may I be one of the good slaves, one with a free man’s heart even if he lacks a free man’s name” (*Hel.* 728–31 [Kovacs]). The word translated as “good” here (γενναῖοισιν) might be better translated as “noble.” Pohlenz comments that “Euripides takes pleasure in introducing as a character the ‘noble’ slave.... In his plays the thought occurs no less than six times.” Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 47.

28 *Hec.* 869; *Heracl.* 867–68; *Rhes.* 663–64.

In his plays, Euripides also examines—often and in some detail—the concepts of state and civic freedom.²⁹ In the *Suppliants*, a herald from Thebes comes to Athens, seeking to speak to the ruler of the city-state. King Theseus responds, “The city is not ruled by a single man but is free. The people rule, and offices are held by yearly turns” (404–407 [Kovacs]). The herald responds, “The city I have come from is ruled by one man and not by a rabble” (410–411 [Kovacs]). Thus begins an extended dialogue arguing the benefits of democracy versus rule by one man. In Athens, freedom included the idea that people were free to participate in the decisions of the government. This civic freedom, however, was only extended to citizens, and only freeborn men from Athens could be citizens. That Euripides would address civic freedom in this play is not surprising as it was written and performed during the Peloponnesian War, the war between Athens and Sparta—city-states with two very different ideas of state government. In two later plays, characters express the idea that Greeks were meant to be free because they valued and lived under a democracy.³⁰ All other people (collectively called barbarians) deserved to be enslaved because they were used to serving one master since they lived under the rule of one man (*Hel.* 276; *IA* 1400–1401).

1.2.4 Summary of the Greek Playwrights

The Greek playwrights have broad ideas of freedom. They continue to portray individual freedom and slavery as opposite experiences and to associate individual freedom with state freedom. In conjunction with the Ionian Revolt and the Persian Wars, the playwrights now speak of expanded individual freedom, which includes civic involvement and freedom for citizens to speak their opinions openly. Due to the wars, the Greeks develop the attitude that since they prefer a democratic government rather than rule by one man, they are fit for freedom where non-Greeks are fit for slavery. Thus, slavery moves beyond being an unfortunate result of war to a deserved position in society. The playwrights also explore to what extent individual freedom exists, expressing the idea that only Zeus is free because humans are always constrained by something or someone. The playwrights contemplate various forms of inner freedom: inner freedom despite external constraint, freedom from defilement, and freedom from fear. They explore death as a type of freedom. Finally, they continue to reveal the moral component of freedom by associating shame with

29 *IA* 1269–75, 1383–84; *Phoen.* 1009–1012; *Rhes.* 467–73, 991–92; *Suppl.* 352–53, 438–41, 476–78.

30 It is important to remember that our source, Euripides, is Athenian; thus Greeks here are viewed through that lens.

being a slave and good character with being free. There is a contrarian move, however, to assert that some slaves could be moral.

1.3 *The Greek Historians*

Herodotus (484–ca. 430) was the first to write a narrative history and was called the “Father of History” by Cicero (*Leg.* 1.5). He wrote about the history of the Persian Empire that ultimately resulted in the Persian wars with the Greek city-states. Thucydides (ca. 460–ca. 404) wrote about the later Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, a war in which he himself participated. He was praised for his vivid portrayal of events and characters (Plutarch, *Glor. Ath.* 3 [347a]) and often imitated.³¹ He left his *History* unfinished, and Xenophon (ca. 430–354) completed the history of the Peloponnesian War in his *Hellenica*. Among other works, Xenophon also wrote *Anabasis*, a history of the 10,000 Greeks, including himself, who joined Cyrus the Younger in his attempt to overthrow the Persian king. Even when Lucian writes in the second century CE, these three are considered the great classical Greek historians (*Quom. hist.* 2).³²

1.3.1 Herodotus

In his *Histories*, Herodotus uses the freedom terminology regularly,³³ and most of his references are to state freedom of some form. He calls a state ruled by another state enslaved, and a state not subjugated to another state free. Herodotus often employs this slave/free dichotomy in his narratives when describing a country or city-state’s situation.³⁴ Within the idea of state freedom, Herodotus also speaks of individual freedom. When a Persian general asks some Spartans why they did not become allies with the Persian king, the Spartans answer, “You know well how to be a slave, but you have never tasted of freedom, to know whether it be sweet or not” (7.135 [Godley]). Here we see the distinction that was peculiar to the Greek mindset: only the Greeks truly know freedom—others who live under the rule of one man only know subjugation

31 W. R. Connor, “Thucydides,” in *Ancient Writers: Greece and Rome*, ed. T. James Luce, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1982), 288.

32 While the historicity of these three authors is often a topic of discussion, how they understood and portrayed various concepts of freedom is more a function of their social context than a question of historicity.

33 A search of ἐλευθερος and its derivatives in *TIG* found seventy-one occurrences in Herodotus.

34 *Hist.* 1.95, 126, 169, 210; 5.49, 116; 6.109; 8.142; 9.45, 60.

and “slavery.”³⁵ In two of his many digressions, Herodotus mentions the individual freedom experienced by a slave set free by manumission (2.135, 4.95). He also distinguishes people as either slave or free (4.142, 5.92, 6.10, 6.58).

Herodotus notes something different, however, between the individual freedom experienced in Athens versus that experienced in Sparta. Speaking of Athens, he says:

It is proved not by one but by many instances that equality is a good thing; seeing that while they were under despotic rulers the Athenians were no better in war than any of their neighbours, yet once they got quit of despots they were far and away the first of all. This, then, shows that while they were oppressed they willed to be cravens, as men working for a master, but when they were freed each one was zealous to achieve for himself. (5.78 [Godley])

Because the Athenian soldiers were equal under their democracy, their achievement in war was not just for a despot but was also for themselves individually. Turning to the Spartans who lived in a city-state focused on the military, Herodotus includes a conversation where Xerxes wonders why the Spartan soldiers fight so bravely even though they are free and do not fight under the compulsion of one ruler. He is told: “Fighting singly they are as brave as any man living, and together they are the best warriors on earth. Free they are, yet not wholly free; for law is their master, whom they fear much more than your men fear you” (7.104 [Godley]). Here Herodotus introduces the concept of law in relation to freedom: in Sparta, the law circumscribed the soldiers’ freedom. They were free, but “not wholly free.”

1.3.2 Thucydides

In his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides has none of the digressions found in Herodotus. He focuses exclusively on the war between Athens and Sparta and their allies. Due to this focus, he too speaks in the main of state freedom.³⁶ The enemy, however, is no longer the “barbarian” Persians, seeking to place the Greeks under their rule. Now Athens is seen as exercising despotic

35 See also Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 17. As Patterson states, “To be free was thus to be Greek, to be noble, to be politically independent, and to be invincible; to be non-Greek was to be a slave, fit only to be ruled.” Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 86.

36 Of the eighty-nine occurrences of ἐλευθερος and its derivatives found in Thucydides, over sixty are to state freedom of some form.

authority over the other city-states, and Sparta is seeking to free her fellow Greeks and others from this hegemony.³⁷ So, Thucydides continues to speak of subjugated states being enslaved and autonomous states being free.

Individual freedom, however, is a more common topic in Thucydides than it was in Herodotus. He continues to divide people into slave and free,³⁸ and like those before him, he associates individual freedom with state freedom (2.63.1, 6.69.3). In addition, he speaks of slaves and Helots³⁹ occasionally being offered individual freedom if they would join in the fighting (4.26.5, 5.34.1). Both sides of a civil war in Corcyra made such an offer: "Both parties sent messengers round into the fields, calling upon the slaves and offering them freedom" (3.73 [Smith]).

1.3.3 Xenophon

Xenophon wrote two histories, *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*, and a variety of other works including *Cyropaedia*, which Walter Miller calls a "historical romance."⁴⁰ With his interest in history, Xenophon speaks often of state freedom but does not juxtapose it with slavery as often as his predecessors⁴¹—he simply speaks of freedom for a state or people.⁴² In *Cyropaedia*, we see Xenophon expressing the idea that for a state to remain free from its enemies, the people must willingly submit to authorities (8.1.4). So, even in a free state, individual freedom must be circumscribed at times to serve the interest of the whole.

Some high-status individuals believed that their freedom included the right to subjugate and rule others; in their view, freedom was not for everyone. Xenophon tells of the Spartan king trying to persuade a Persian satrap to rebel against his own king, and become allies with the Spartans:

37 *Hist.* 1.124.3, 2.8.4, 3.10.3–6, 3.62.5–6, 4.85.1, 4.86.1, 5.9.9, 6.76.4.

38 *Hist.* 2.78.4, 2.103.1, 4.118.7, 5.83.2, 8.15.2, 8.28.4, 8.41.2, 8.62.2, 8.73.5.

39 Helots were not chattel slaves, although ancient authors often called them slaves. Finley notes that the difference between Helots and slaves were that they "were not foreigners but a subject people working their own lands in a state of servitude" who had "property rights of a kind: the law, at least, permitted them to retain everything they produced beyond the fixed deliveries to their masters." M. I. Finley, "Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?" *Historia* 8, no. 2 (1959): 158.

40 Xenophon, *Cyropaedia: Books 1–4*, trans. Walter Miller, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), viii. He also wrote Socratic works such as *Memorabilia*, *Symposium*, and *Oeconomicus*. I will discuss these Socratic works below in the section "The Greek Philosophers."

41 *Anab.* 7.7.32; *Hell.* 3.5.13.

42 *Ages.* 2.29; *Anab.* 3.2.13; *Cyr.* 3.2.23; *Hell.* 2.2.23, 2.4.17, 2.4.20, 3.1.3–4, 3.1.16, 3.1.20, 4.4.6, 5.2.12, 6.1.10.

It is within your power by joining with us to live in the enjoyment of your possessions without doing homage to anyone or having any master. And being free is worth, in my opinion, as much as all manner of possessions. Yet it is not this that we urge upon you, to be free and poor, but rather by employing us as allies to increase, not the King's empire, but your own, subduing those who are now your fellow-slaves so that they shall be your subjects. And if, being free, you should at the same time become rich, what would you lack of being altogether happy? (*Hell.* 4.1.35–36 [Brownson])

Only the Persian satrap will experience this freedom, for the Spartan king encourages him to subdue others to make them his subjects so that when he wins his freedom, he might not be poor but become rich from these new subjects. In *Cyropaedia*, Cyrus adds a moral component when he tells his compatriots, "We ought to practice virtue even more than we did before we secured these advantages We must claim the right to rule over our subjects only on the ground that we are their betters" (7.5.77–78 [Miller]).

Xenophon also refers to individual freedom. He continues to divide people into slave and free.⁴³ Like Thucydides, Xenophon speaks of Helots receiving their individual freedom as a reward for serving in the military (*Hell.* 6.5.28). In addition, he touches on the idea that there is certain work that is unworthy of free persons, which only slaves should perform. One man comments that "he was driving a mule, assigned to that post by his messmates, although he was a free man," implying that driving a mule was a job only for a slave (*Anab.* 5.8.5 [Brownson]). Xenophon speaks often of people desiring freedom, whether they currently have it or not: freedom, both state and individual, is something people highly value (*Hell.* 3.1.3; *Anab.* 1.7.3; *Mem.* 4.5.2). In *Cyropaedia* the King of Armenia tells Cyrus, "I longed for liberty; for it seemed to me to be a glorious thing both to be free myself and to bequeath liberty to my children" (3.1.10 [Miller]). While this attitude may have always been present, Xenophon appears to be the first to articulate it so clearly and regularly. Finally, Xenophon uses the freedom terminology, like the poets and playwrights, to indicate good or noble characteristics associated with a free person.⁴⁴

43 *Ages.* 1.22; *Anab.* 2.5.32, 5.8.5, 7.4.24; *Cyr.* 3.1.37, 6.4.7, 8.1.4, 8.1.43–44; *Hell.* 1.6.24, 2.1.19, 2.3.6, 3.1.21, 3.5.12, 4.5.5, 5.1.11, 7.3.8, 7.5.15; *Hier.* 6.5; *Lac.* 1.4.

44 *Ages.* 11.8.2; *Cyr.* 5.2.16, 5.3.3, 6.4.4, 8.4.32; *Lac.* 11.3, 12.5.

1.3.4 Summary of the Greek Historians

The Greek historians express fewer concepts of freedom than the playwrights. They focus exclusively on state and individual freedom, apparently never exploring inner freedom. They continue to associate individual freedom with state freedom, but some note that state freedom requires individuals to submit to the authority of the leaders and the law. Thus, individual freedom must be limited on behalf of state freedom. The historians, like the playwrights, subdivide humanity into slave and free. They speak of an owner providing a slave individual freedom through the act of manumission, but they also mention that the state could, at times, offer slaves freedom in exchange for military service.⁴⁵ Xenophon emphasizes that individual freedom is highly valued. And he alone of the historians uses the freedom terminology to indicate noble characteristics of the free person, demonstrating a moral component to freedom.

1.4 *The Greek Philosophers*

While there were many Greek philosophers who taught, wrote, and influenced their world, we will focus on Socrates (470–399), Plato (428/427–348/347), and Aristotle (384–322).⁴⁶ Diodorus Siculus, writing in the first century BCE, speaks of the great advances made in Greece after the Persian war, and in regards to philosophy, he lists these three men (*Bib. Hist.* 12.1.4–5). Socrates was concerned with ethics and how to live a virtuous life. Cicero maintains that “all philosophers ... sincerely claimed the title of followers of Socrates” (*De or.* 3.16.61 [Rackham]). Plato, a student of Socrates, lived during the time of Athens’s decline. Part of his legacy was the establishment of his school in Athens, the Academy. Aristotle was Plato’s student, tutor to Alexander the Great, and founder of the Lyceum in Athens. His interests were wide-ranging, and he made contributions to almost every area of knowledge.

45 Here is silent evidence that slavery and manumission—the power to take away individual freedom and the power to restore individual freedom—requires group approval, even if unexpressed. While it may be the individual who owns the slave, the group as a whole must permit and allow such ownership. And while an individual can manumit a slave, the group must agree that manumission is permissible. The group, however, can free a slave without the permission of the individual owner, effectively circumscribing the owner’s individual freedom. Thus, there is a group dynamic and power involved in slavery and manumission even though it appears to function on an individual level. As Patterson notes, “Slavery ... has never existed in a social vacuum A slave relationship, in short, requires at least the tacit support of those not directly involved with it.” Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 10.

46 There were also the philosophers who founded Stoicism, Cynicism, and Epicureanism. I will focus on the resurgence and Romanization of these philosophies that took place and predominated in the first century CE in the next section.

1.4.1 Socrates

Socrates wrote nothing himself, and it is only through the writings of others that we can attempt to construct his philosophy. But it is an open question as to what exactly Socrates taught, for the reports of his philosophy by his students Plato and Xenophon, and another contemporary, Aristophanes, are inconsistent and sometimes conflicting.⁴⁷ Many scholars argue that each of these writers has created a character named “Socrates,” whom they then make a mouthpiece for either their own or opposing philosophies.⁴⁸ For the purpose of this study, however, it is not critical to distinguish between what Socrates thought about freedom and what Plato or Xenophon thought about it.⁴⁹ We are simply trying to establish the various ideas of freedom that the Greek philosophers expressed. So, we will set out to identify the ideas of freedom expressed in the Socratic works of Xenophon and Plato, without trying to answer the question of exactly whose views they are.

As mentioned earlier, Xenophon wrote several works containing Socratic dialogues such as *Memorabilia* and *Oeconomicus*. In these works, Socrates speaks of slave and free. He challenges the idea that some work is fit only for slaves (*Mem.* 2.7.6–7), but he still distinguishes the character of slave and free. The freedom terminology in Xenophon’s Socratic dialogues is used to indicate positive character (*Mem.* 2.1.22, 2.8.4), but here the opposite term, ἀνελεύθερος, is used to indicate negative character.⁵⁰ In a conversation with a sculptor, Socrates asserts that certain character traits are reflected in the body: “And further, nobility and dignity (ἐλευθέριον), self-abasement and servility (ἀνελεύθερον), prudence and understanding, insolence and vulgarity: these are reflected in the face and in the attitudes of the body whether still or in motion” (*Mem.* 3.10.5 [Marchant]). In Xenophon, Socrates also speaks about self-control, which results in inner freedom. If a person did not exercise self-control, they would fall prey to the passions and become enslaved by them (*Mem.* 1.3.11, 1.5.5, 4.5.2).

47 This open question is known as the “Socratic problem.” Alexander Nehamas, “Socrates,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1378.

48 Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *The Philosophy of Socrates* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000), 15.

49 We will not explore Aristophanes’ work, *Nubes*, since he is critical of Socrates and most scholars see very little of the historical Socrates in his representation. *Ibid.*, 26, 33–38.

50 Pohlenz notes that “the word ἀνελεύθερος [is] first found in Aesch. *Agam.*, 1494, then in Plato, Xenophon, Aristophanes (*Plut.* 591), etc.” Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 185n49. But it is the frequency of occurrence in the Socratic dialogues that seems to indicate that by this time it has become a common way of speaking about character.

The early works of Plato appear to most clearly reflect Socrates's philosophy.⁵¹ In these works, Socrates again speaks of free and slave.⁵² In *Lysis*, Socrates asserts that it is knowledge that brings freedom, and the knowledgeable person will have control over others (210a–b). We see again the use of ἐλεύθερος and its opposite, ἀνελεύθερος, to indicate positive or negative character.⁵³ And in the funeral oration in *Menexenus*, Socrates reviews the history of the Greeks, referring to state freedom and the individual freedom dependent upon it.⁵⁴

It was in his manner of death, however, that Socrates made perhaps his most significant statement on freedom. According to Diogenes Laertius (3rd c. CE), Socrates was indicted “on a charge of impiety and corrupting the youth” (2.5.38 [Hicks]) and was convicted by a jury of the charge. Even though he denied the charge and believed he was wronged (*Crito* 50c, 54b), he asserted that he must submit to the Athenian laws or be considered a “destroyer of the laws” (*Crito* 53b [Emlyn-Jones/Predy]). For him, the laws of the state necessarily circumscribed individual freedom.⁵⁵ But what struck Plato, and many after him, was that Socrates evidenced an inner freedom in accepting his death sentence: he was not in angst over what he perceived to be an unjust verdict or afraid of his impending death (*Crito* 43b–c).

1.4.2 Plato

Plato was a student of Socrates, but he developed his own philosophy. Throughout his works, Plato regularly refers to people as slave or free.⁵⁶ He gives tacit support to the idea that Greeks are not fit for slavery when he states that Greeks should not enslave other Greeks (*Resp.* 5.469c). Like Xenophon, he writes of work that is only fit for slaves.⁵⁷ So individual freedom included freedom from labor that was deemed unworthy of a free person.

51 I will follow Richard Kraut's list of Plato's early works, which he holds to represent the historical Socrates: *Apology*, *Charmides*, *Crito*, *Euthydemus*, *Euthyphro*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Major*, *Hippias Minor*, *Ion*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, *Menexenus*, *Meno*, *Protagoras*, *Republic* Book I. Richard Kraut, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 124.

52 *Gorg.* 502d–e, 514d, 515a; *Ion* 540b; *Lach.* 182a, 186b, 208b, 208c; *Meno* 71.e; *Resp.* 1.351d–e.

53 *Gorg.* 465b, 485c, 518a; *Menex.* 245c–d.

54 *Menex.* 239b, 239d, 240e, 242a–c, 242e–243a, 244c–d, 244e–245a.

55 Socrates notes in his explanation to Crito that the reason this is so is because he chose to stay in Athens and live under the Athenian laws. Before the indictment and trial, he was free to leave Athens if he had decided the laws were unjust (*Crito* 51d, 52b–e).

56 In Plato's works (not including his Socratic works) he uses ἐλεύθερος and its derivatives almost two hundred times; he uses the terminology to distinguish slave and free over fifty times.

57 *Leg.* 5.741e, 7.796d, 7.816e, 11.919d.

As in the Socratic dialogues, Plato uses the freedom terminology to indicate character,⁵⁸ giving evidence again that this terminology has developed into a shorthand for communicating the idea that free people had noble characteristics and slaves had dishonorable characteristics. When slaves acted in a noble way, however, they could earn the right to be set free. When Plato speaks of the laws for his ideal city, he gives examples of where a slave could give aid to someone, and the city would grant the slave his freedom.⁵⁹ It appears important to Plato to maintain the distinction in character between free and slave: he suggests laws to set slaves free who act in a noble manner, and he regularly upbraids free people who act in an ignoble manner.⁶⁰

In one passage, Plato off-handedly addresses the reason slavery could exist and continue in ancient Greece. He speaks of wealthy citizens who own many slaves, and what he says is worth quoting in full:

“You know, then, that these men own their slaves without fear and aren’t afraid of them?” “Yes, for what should they be afraid of?” “Nothing,” I said, “but can you think of the reason why?” “Yes, because the state helps each one of its individual citizens.” “Well said,” I replied. “But what if one of the gods were to remove one man who owns fifty slaves, or even more, himself together with his wife and children, and put them in a deserted spot with the rest of his possessions and household, where none of the free citizens would be in the position of coming to help him? In what and how great a state of fear do you think he’d get himself into, that he, his children and wife would be killed by their slaves?” “Very great, I’d say,” he said “What if the god settled others round him so he has many neighbors who wouldn’t tolerate anyone who thought he was fit to be master of another, but supposing they did get hold of such a person, they’d punish him with the ultimate sanctions, wouldn’t they?” “I still think he’d be in still worse trouble,” he said, “blockaded by nothing but enemies.” (*Resp.* 9.578d–579b [Emlyn-Jones/Preddy])

Here Plato states explicitly what the Greek historians give examples of implicitly: that slavery and manumission require group consent. Again, we see that while slavery and manumission—the removal and restoration of individual

58 *Leg.* 1.643e–644a, 5.728e, 7.791d, 7.796d, 7.802d, 8.823e, 8.835d, 11.914c, 12.941b–c, 12.946c; *Phaedr.* 243c, 253b; *Resp.* 3.395c, 9.577c–d; *Tim.* 21c.

59 *Leg.* 9.881b–c, 11.914a, 11.932d.

60 *Leg.* 1.635c–d, 7.807d–808a, 11.914b–c; *Resp.* 4.431b–c.

freedom—may appear to function on the individual level, they have a powerful, if somewhat hidden, group component.

In both the *Republic* and the *Laws*, Plato speaks of the state and its relationship to individual freedom. In the *Laws*, Plato argues that a state needs proper and just laws to ensure its continuance and that the laws are necessary to hold individual freedom in check. But even then, too much individual freedom could cause a disregard for the law (*Leg.* 3.701a–b). When he addresses this topic in his *Republic*, his comments drip with sarcasm: “And, my dear friend,’ I said, ‘it must permeate into every private household until finally it infects even animals with anarchy Indeed horses and mules are accustomed to go about in total freedom, always haughtily barging into those who get in their way, unless they step aside” (8.562e, 563c [Emlyn-Jones/Predy]).⁶¹ Plato argues that the good of the state and obedience to the law must come before the exercise of individual freedom.

It comes as no surprise that when Plato speaks about inner freedom, he speaks about self-control (*Resp.* 4.431a). In his *Laws*, he says that people who are not trained in how to resist pleasures will find that “their condition of soul will be partly enslaved and partly free, and they will not deserve to be called, without qualification, free men and men of courage” (1.635d [Bury]). While Socrates and Plato had different ideas of the soul itself, they agreed that self-control was the key to inner freedom.

1.4.3 Aristotle

Aristotle was Plato’s student; but just as Plato’s philosophy is distinct from that of Socrates, Aristotle’s is distinct from Plato’s. Aristotle continues to divide humankind into free and slave,⁶² and he asserts that “it is manifest therefore that there are cases of people of whom some are freemen and the others slaves by nature” (*Pol.* 1255a2–3 [Rackham]).⁶³ He grants that in some cases, people are slaves due to defeat in war, and these people are not slaves by nature but by law (*Pol.* 1255a6). He acknowledges that there are those who argue that no

61 Because of this unbridled freedom, Plato was highly critical of democracy (*Resp.* 8.558c).

62 Of the almost 200 occurrences of ἐλεύθερος and its derivatives in Aristotle’s non-disputed works, over seventy are in the context of distinguishing people as slave or free.

63 Aristotle’s theory of natural slavery is well known. Garnsey argues, however, that this theory is found only in Aristotle’s *Politics*. Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 108. So, while many point to inconsistencies in Aristotle’s portrayal of slavery, Garnsey argues instead for development in his thought (pp. 124–27).

one is a slave by nature, and slavery is therefore unjust (*Pol.* 1253b20–23).⁶⁴ He concludes, however, that there are some people who are slaves by nature, and that “slavery for the one and mastership for the other are advantageous, and it is just and proper for the one party to be governed and for the other to govern” (*Pol.* 1255b6–7 [Rackham]). Aristotle justifies this need for the slave to be ruled by asserting that the slave has no “deliberative part” of the soul (*Pol.* 1260a12–14 [Rackham]). One would think then that Aristotle would not approve of the manumission of slaves. But he comments that manumission can serve as a reward (*Pol.* 1330a32–34), and he himself is said to free several slaves in his will (Diog. Laert., *Lives* 5.14–15). For Aristotle, however, full individual freedom requires the use of slaves (*Pol.* 1255b35–37).

Aristotle follows Plato in using the freedom terminology of ἐλεύθερος and ἀνελεύθερος to differentiate between proper and improper behavior, thus indicating the character of a person.⁶⁵ He also makes clear a further distinction he assumes throughout his writings: the free are not only distinct from slaves, but the educated free are also distinct in character from the uneducated (*Pol.* 1342a19–26). Due to this distinction, Aristotle asserts that some free people have “slavish” characteristics and other free people have truly free characteristics.⁶⁶

In his *Politics*, Aristotle states what could be a definition of individual freedom. He explains:

This then is one mark of liberty which all democrats set down as a principle of the constitution. And one is for a man to live as he likes; for they say that this is the function of liberty, inasmuch as to live not as one likes is the life of a man that is a slave. This is the second principle of democracy, and from it has come the claim not to be governed, preferably

64 This acknowledgment that some in the ancient world condemned slavery is often too quickly passed over. Chris de Wet observes that “the argument often goes that the early Christians, like most ancient persons, were not able to think outside the constraints of their own world and reality, and that slavery was so ‘natural’ that to imagine a response against slavery would be unthinkable.” While a *political* response was unthinkable, an individual response—as Aristotle indicates—was not. De Wet continues, “So to say, quite simply, that the ancients were unable to think beyond their own experience of slavery as ‘natural’ is not accurate and a more sophisticated stance ... should be adopted.” Chris L. de Wet, *The Unbound God: Slavery and the Formation of Early Christian Thought*, RSECW (New York: Routledge, 2018), 6, 8.

65 *Eth. Eud.* 1231b–1233b; *Eth. Nic.* 1099a15–24, 1107b15–19, 1108b20–24, 1119b22–30, 1120a6–15, 1128a16–22, 1130a15–19, 1176b20–24, 1178a25–29, 1178b10–14, 1179b5–9; *Metaph.* 995a.5–14; *Pol.* 1258b10–14, 1263b10–14, 1265a20–24, 1314a1–10, 1326b30–34, 1336a–b, 1339b5–9, 1340b10–14; *Rhet.* 1.5.6, 1.9.5–10, 1.9.26–27, 1.10.4, 2.4.8, 2.6.5–7, 2.13.6, 3.12.5–6, 3.18.7.

66 It is in observations like these that we see most clearly the bias of a high-status writer.

not by anybody, or failing that, to govern and be governed in turns. (*Pol.* 1317b10–16 [Rackham])

It is important to note that this individual freedom occurs under a democratic constitution. So again, we see individual freedom dependent upon state freedom. But Aristotle does not leave this definition of individual freedom unchallenged. In speaking of democracies, he asserts that “they define liberty wrongly Hence in democracies of this sort everybody lives as he likes But this is bad; for to live in conformity with the constitution ought not to be considered slavery but safety” (*Pol.* 1310a28–36 [Rackham]). Like Plato before him, he argues for the necessity of the rule of law and the need for subjugation to it.

1.4.4 Summary of the Greek Philosophers

The Greek philosophers explore ideas of individual, state, and inner freedom. They continue to divide humanity into slave and free. They defend the premise that the Greeks are naturally a free people while barbarians are naturally a slavish people. Individual freedom also meant freedom from work that is only fit for slaves. Aristotle defines individual freedom as being independent from the rule of others and living as one likes. Too much individual freedom, however, is detrimental to the state, and it therefore must be circumscribed by just laws. The philosophers regularly use the freedom terminology, *ἐλεύθερος* and *ἀνελεύθερος*, to indicate positive or negative character, thus indicating a moral component to freedom. But they recognize that slaves could evidence moral behavior, therefore some slaves deserve to acquire their individual freedom. Plato gives explicit evidence that it is the group who establishes and perpetuates slavery and allows manumission. In regard to inner freedom, both Socrates and Plato assert that self-control provides this type of freedom.

1.5 *Summary of Greek Concepts of Freedom*

We have explored some of the significant ancient Greek literature from Homer in the ninth or eighth century to Aristotle in the fourth. These ancient Greek poets, playwrights, historians, and philosophers reveal that the idea of freedom was not monolithic. There was no simple definition. It is evident, however, that the idea of freedom became imbedded in the Greek culture and informed their thought in multiple areas.

The Greek poets write of individual freedom in contrast to slavery. They speak of state freedom, with individual freedom dependent upon it. They associate positive characteristics with the free and a loss of worth with slavery, thus indicating a moral component to freedom.

The Greek playwrights speak of individual and state freedom, but they also speak of civic freedom. They wrestle with people being constrained by the gods, so they contemplate inner freedom and briefly consider death providing a type of freedom. They indicate there is a moral component to freedom by associating shame with slavery and virtue with freedom. And they speak of the attitude that slavery is not just a misfortune of war, but that some people—non-Greeks—are fit for slavery.

The Greek historians focus exclusively on individual and state freedom, writing that individual freedom must be constrained in order to maintain state freedom. They imply that there is a group dynamic and power involved in slavery and manumission. And there is an emphasis on the high value people place on individual freedom.

The Greek philosophers write of individual, state, and inner freedom. Aristotle provides a definition of individual freedom as being independent from the rule of others and to live as one likes, but individual freedom must be circumscribed by just laws. The philosophers continue to advance the moral component to freedom by associating immoral behavior with slaves and moral behavior with free persons. They give explicit evidence of the group dynamic required to establish and perpetuate slavery and manumission. They, like the playwrights, explore the idea of inner freedom, asserting that self-control results in this type of freedom.

If we were able to ask an ancient Greek how he or she understood the concept of freedom, this literature shows us that we would receive a wide range of answers. However, the most common one would surely be that freedom was not being a slave—for, on the most basic level, the Greeks divided their world into free and slave. While there was a range from the full citizen to the chattel slave with foreigners, metics, freedpersons, Helots, and others in between,⁶⁷ the Greek writers could refer to slave and free and, in doing so, encompass all people.

Scholars rightfully note that social status determined how much individual freedom a person had. For example, a citizen of Athens could own land where a foreigner could not, although both persons were free. Therefore, some argue that freedom itself was not the most valuable asset—rather, status was.⁶⁸ But this is a false dichotomy. The Greeks valued both, but for different reasons.⁶⁹

67 Finley, "Slave Labour," 147.

68 See especially Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom*, 14–17.

69 Patterson, using different categories, comments that "while civic freedom remained the primary value for the Athenian citizens, this is not to say that they did not also value personal freedom; rather, they placed it lower in the cultural chord. That, however, was not how the freedman and other metics, not to mention the slaves saw the matter. Since civic

Xenophon speaks of people desiring freedom, the historians speak of slaves and Helots risking their lives for freedom, Plato and Aristotle express concern about people exercising too much freedom, and the playwrights and philosophers seek inner freedom when external freedom seems unattainable. People would not desire, take risks for, and pursue something they did not find valuable.

Throughout, whether the topic is individual, state, civic, or inner freedom, almost without exception the discussion includes the idea of slavery as the opposite experience. Many scholars who have studied the rise of Greek freedom have noted that slavery and freedom appear to be intimately related. As M. I. Finley has famously remarked, "One aspect of Greek history, in short, is the advance, hand in hand, of freedom and slavery."⁷⁰ And almost from the beginning a moral component developed, where slavery came to be identified with shame and vice and freedom came to be identified with honor and morality. I would argue that this identification, while acknowledged, is not always fully appreciated by those who explore Greek freedom. Greeks may have understood freedom in a variety of ways, but I would suggest that regardless of how they understood it, they identified freedom with honor and dignity. By the time of Aristotle, this identification was complete and, for the most part, unquestioned. And it is this identification that solidified the divide between free and slave. As mentioned earlier, there was a spectrum between free and slave, and movement along this spectrum.⁷¹ But a person who, at any point, was identified as a slave also became identified as ignoble and immoral. Aristotle said that to be free was to live as one wanted and not to be ruled by another, but we have seen that many Greek authors indicate that to be free was also to be honorable and virtuous. So, the question arises: did those who were unfree desire not only release from being ruled by another but also release from the degradation that was inherent in slavery? Did Greeks desire not just freedom, but the honor and virtue it provided?

freedom was out of the question for them, it is understandable that personal freedom became the primary freedom in their conception of the triad." Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 135.

⁷⁰ Finley, "Slave Labour," 164. See also David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), 36; Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, xiii; Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 3; Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom*, 28. Patterson credits Pohlenz as the "first modern scholar to expose the central role of slavery in the development and nature of freedom." Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 79.

⁷¹ Zelnick-Abramovitz explains, "Freedom was some degree or other of the absence of constraint and compulsion; slavery was some degree or other of the absence of freedom." Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free*, 38.

2 Roman Concepts of Freedom

Greece and Rome did not understand freedom in the same way—or so the argument goes. Max Pohlenz states that “the Roman *libertas* was different from the Greek ἐλευθερία.”⁷² Hans Dieter Betz asserts that “the Romans never fully shared the Greek experience, although they took over some of the concepts.”⁷³ Chaim Wirszubski draws the line more distinctly when he explains that “*eleutheria* with *isonomia* and *parrhesia* as its chief expressions appeared to the Romans as being nearer *licentia* than *libertas*.”⁷⁴ So these scholars, among others, argue that while Rome borrowed and based her idea of freedom upon that of Greece, she changed it in the process of borrowing.

But as we saw with a Greek understanding of freedom, it would be difficult—if not misguided—to identify one, simple Roman definition of freedom. Stephanie McCarter, while exploring the writing of Horace, warns us that “we must ... bear in mind the caveat repeatedly made by scholars that freedom during this period, just as it is today, was a complicated idea that did not lend itself to simple or straightforward definitions.”⁷⁵ In addition, the transition from the Republic to the Principate caused some reassessment of the idea of freedom, especially in the political realm. So I again search, not for a definition, but for the range of ideas that freedom would invoke for an ancient Roman.

I will explore the Roman literature written during the Roman Republic and Principate through the end of the first century CE. In order to discover the range of ideas of Roman freedom—and if they did indeed differ from those of the Greeks—I will take the same approach I took with the Greek sources, exploring the Roman sources by genre. This survey of genres and authors is again representative rather than exhaustive, with the goal of discovering the various conceptions of freedom expressed by ancient Romans. I will focus on the use and context of the primary Latin word for “free,” *liber* and its derivatives.⁷⁶ It is important to acknowledge once again that our sources are those of the elite. Wirszubski has noted that “what the ordinary people thought is largely a

72 Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 108.

73 Hans Dieter Betz, *Paul's Concept of Freedom in the Context of Hellenistic Discussions about the Possibilities of Human Freedom* (Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies, 1977), 3.

74 Chaim Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 13.

75 Stephanie McCarter, *Horace between Freedom and Slavery: The First Book of Epistles*, wsc (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), 6.

76 All lexical searches in the Latin sources were done through *The Packard Humanities Institute: Classical Latin Texts (PHI Latin Texts)*, <http://latin.packhum.org>.

matter of conjecture and generalization.”⁷⁷ So we will work through a selection of ancient Roman literature, listening to how Roman poets, playwrights, historians, and philosophers talked about the concept of freedom.

2.1 *The Roman Poets*

Virgil (70–19 BCE), Horace (65–8 BCE), and Ovid (43 BCE–17 CE) lived during the time of the fall of the Roman Republic and the establishment of the Roman Empire. While their Greek predecessors influenced and inspired them, these Roman poets gave Latin verse a place of its own. Virgil had “the favor of the sainted Augustus” and “popularity with the citizens of Rome” even during his own lifetime (Tacitus, *Dial.* 13.2 [Peterson/Winterbottom]). Quintilian considered Horace the best of the Roman satirists and one of the few lyric poets worth reading (*Inst.* 10.1.94, 96). Ovid boldly claimed that “elegy admits it owes as much to me as the noble epic owes to Virgil” (*Rem. am.* 395–96), and many who study the genre concur.⁷⁸

2.1.1 Virgil

Virgil is best known for his epic poem the *Aeneid*, but he also wrote the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*. It is not surprising that in his *Aeneid*, a poem that retells the legendary origins of Rome, Virgil speaks mainly of state freedom (6.819–23, 7.367–70, 8.648). He also refers to individual freedom in his *Eclogues*, as Tityrus describes his manumission from slavery: “Yet [freedom] did cast her eyes on me, and came after a long time For—yes, I must confess—while Galatea ruled me, I had neither hope of freedom nor thought of savings” (1.29–32 [Goold]).

2.1.2 Horace

Horace was the son of a freedman, and perhaps because of this, he speaks of freedom more frequently than his contemporary Virgil. He rarely speaks, however, of state freedom.⁷⁹ Horace only once uses the term *liber* to indicate a free person in juxtaposition to a slave (*Carm.* 3.5.21–22). But he also uses the term *ingenuus*, which was used to identify a person who was freeborn—one

⁷⁷ Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea*, 91.

⁷⁸ One notable exception is Quintilian (*Inst.* 10.1.88, 98). Steven Hinds comments that “within elegy [Ovid] achieved an unparalleled variety of output by exploiting and extending the range of the genre as no poet had before.” Stephen Hinds, “Ovid,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1057.

⁷⁹ *Carm.* 1.37.1–2, 4.14.14–18; *Saec.* 41–44.

who had never been a slave.⁸⁰ We see this terminology in *Ars Poetica*, where Horace is describing someone who has no gift for poetry but still feels entitled to write: “Yet the man who knows not how dares to frame verses. Why not? He is free (*liber*), even free-born (*ingenuus*)” (382–383 [Fairclough]). So, we see the Romans making a clear semantic distinction between those who were free-born and those who were not—a distinction that a son of a freedman would be particularly aware of (*Sat.* 1.6.89–92).

Horace, at times, discusses the Stoic ideal of inner freedom. In one of his satires, he includes a supposed dialogue between himself and one of his slaves, Davus, that takes place during the Saturnalia—a Roman holiday where slaves were given time off, slaves and masters dined together, and slaves were allowed some freedom to speak.⁸¹ Davus, recounting lessons heard indirectly from the Stoic Crispinus (2.7.44–45), accuses Horace of being a slave to his passions and therefore to others who satisfy those passions (*Sat.* 2.7.80–82). Davus then concludes, “Who then is free? The wise man, who is lord over himself, whom neither poverty nor death nor bonds affright, who bravely defies his passions, and scorns ambition” (*Sat.* 2.7.83–86 [Fairclough]). So, Horace, through his mouthpiece Davus, presents the Stoic understanding that inner freedom, achieved through self-control, was the only true freedom.⁸² Like the Stoics, he commends contentment rather than a constant accumulation of wealth. And he associates this contentment with freedom, contrasting it with the slavery of avarice (*Ep.* 1.10.34–41, 1.16.63–65).

While Horace presents the Stoic ideal that inner freedom is the only true freedom, he appears to desire a different type of freedom. In a letter to his patron, Maecenas, Horace responds to his patron's desire to have him return to Rome. He knows he owes his comfortable situation to Maecenas, and he expresses his gratitude. He declares, however, that he will “give up all. I neither praise the poor man's sleep, when I am fed full on capons, nor would I barter my ease and my freedom for all the wealth of Araby Try me, whether I can restore your gifts, and cheerfully too” (*Ep.* 1.7.34–39 [Fairclough]). Suetonius reports that at one point, Augustus requested Horace to become his secretary, but Horace declined the position (*Poet.* 24.22–23). Gilbert Highet comments that Horace's “father had spent some of his life in slavery, and he himself in

80 *Carm.* 3.24.54–56; *Sat.* 1.6.7–11, 19–22.

81 John Scheid, “Saturnus, Saturnalia,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1322.

82 See also *Ep.* 1.1.41–42. The Stoic understanding of freedom will be explored more fully in a later section.

something uncomfortably close to it. He was determined to be free.”⁸³ The manner in which Horace responds to Maecenas and Augustus reveals that he is not seeking inner freedom: what he values and desires is individual freedom, even from the patronage system.

2.1.3 Ovid

Ovid wrote about love (*Amores*, *Ars amatoria*), mythology (*Metamorphoses*), and the Roman calendar (*Fasti*). After his exile by Augustus to Tomis, he wrote letters appealing for an end to his sentence and a return to Rome.⁸⁴ As his topics might indicate, he mentions state freedom only once in passing (*Am.* 3.15.7–10). And only once does he write about inner freedom, and this during his exile when he did not have the freedom to return to Rome that he so desired (*Trist.* 4.2.57–59).

Ovid often mentions slaves and freedom. He uses the term *liber* to indicate someone who is not a slave (*Am.* 2.7.19–22; *Metam.* 13.457–69), and in both of these examples, there is the implication that it is shameful to be a slave. Like Horace, he uses the *ingenuus* terminology to indicate someone born free, never enslaved.⁸⁵ He mentions the freedom given to slaves when they are manumitted by their owners (*Am.* 2.2.39–40; *Ars* 2.287–90). When writing of his exile, he compares his hope of pardon with the hope of freedom that the slave harbors: “Hope therefore of lessening my punishment, Graecinus, has not altogether forsaken my soul. That goddess ... causes even the ditcher to live in spite of his shackles and to think that his limbs will be freed from the iron” (*Ex Ponto*, 1.6.27–32 [Wheeler]).

Ovid speaks often of individual freedom. He describes fame as “unfettered (*libera*) and obedient to no one’s will” (*Metam.* 15.853 [Miller]), expressing the idea that freedom is not being subject to someone else. In the *Fasti*, he tells the story of Terminus, the god of boundaries, who must remain in the temple with Jupiter: “From that time, Terminus, thou hast not been free to flit: abide in that station in which thou hast been placed” (2.673–74 [Frazer]). Here he implies that individual freedom includes the ability to go wherever one might want to

83 Gilbert Highet, “Libertino Patre Natus,” *AJP* 94, no. 3 (1973): 281. Highet makes the observation that “for the first years at least, Horace was a client, or something closely equivalent to a client. But he always longed for complete freedom. In *Serm.* 1.6 and 2.6, in *Epist.* 1.7 and 1.14, he writes chiefly, not about passing delightful hours with Maecenas and his friends, but about getting away from them and staying away.” Ibid.

84 Ovid was exiled (purportedly) for his *Ars amatoria*, and his books were banned from Roman libraries.

85 *Am.* 1.7.49–50, 3.4.33–34, 3.11a.9–10; *Ars* 2.215–16; *Metam.* 9.669–73.

go. He often writes of people, especially women, being free from societal constraints or expectations (*Am.* 2.2.15; *Her.* 17.153–54; *Metam.* 9.557–60).⁸⁶

2.1.4 Summary of the Roman Poets

The Roman poets speak of freedom in a variety of ways. While they all mention state freedom, only Virgil focuses on this freedom in his epic history of Rome. This lack of focus on state freedom is likely due to the time in which they write—when the Roman people desire peace from civil wars, not from external oppression. The poets rarely speak of inner freedom. Horace references the Stoic view that only the wise man is free, but it is questionable if he fully embraces this ideology. We see him declaring his independence from his patron, and it is obvious that he desires more than inner freedom. The poets primarily focus on individual freedom. They sometimes use the term *liber* to indicate someone who is not a slave, but they also use the specific term *ingenuus* to indicate someone who was not only free but freeborn. Perhaps the Romans desired this further semantic distinction because citizenship created a distinction in Greece that it did not in Rome. All three poets mention the individual freedom a slave experiences when manumitted by his or her owner. And while Horace was the son of a freedman, it is Ovid who writes of the hope that slaves harbored for freedom. Ovid refers to the shame associated with slavery, indicating that there is a moral component to freedom. And it is Ovid who chafes against the restraint of individual freedom. He writes of an individual freedom that runs contrary to the Augustan reforms and finds himself in exile as a result.

2.2 The Roman Playwrights

Plautus (ca. 254–184 BCE) and Terence (185–159 BCE) are the only two Roman playwrights for whom we have complete texts.⁸⁷ They both borrowed freely from the Greek playwrights of New Comedy who preceded them. They were not mere translators, however, and their innovations mark them as gifted

86 It is not insignificant that he writes during the time of the Augustan reforms, at least some of which were aimed at “Roman private morality.” P. J. Davis, “Ovid’s Amores: A Political Reading,” *CP* 94, no. 4 (1999): 435. Alston comments that “the interference in ‘private’ matters reflected in these laws was both unprecedented and controversial.” Richard Alston, *Aspects of Roman History, 31 BC–AD 117*, 2nd ed., *Aspects of Classical Civilisation* (London: Routledge, 2014), 70.

87 Plautus, *Amphitryon*; *The Comedy of Asses*; *The Pot of Gold*; *The Two Bacchises*; *The Captives*, trans. Wolfgang de Melo, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), lxviii.

playwrights.⁸⁸ They both wrote during the time of the Republic, the Punic Wars (264–146 BCE), and of Cato the Elder (234–149 BCE) in particular—an icon of conservatism and Roman morality who opposed Greek influence. Their comedies were performed on Roman festival days and often portrayed a world turned upside down. In his study of Plautus's works, Erich Segal notes that “to a society with a fantastic compulsion for hierarchies, order, and obedience, he presents a saturnalian chaos.”⁸⁹ But perhaps we should consider that it is the elites who have this compulsion, not necessarily the common people—the Catos, not the slaves.⁹⁰ While these plays do not represent the Roman world during the time of Plautus and Terence in a direct fashion, they perhaps provide us an indirect glimpse into the thoughts and desires of the common people of Rome.⁹¹ Therefore, this genre in particular may give us insight into how the non-elite Roman viewed freedom.⁹²

2.2.1 Plautus

Plautus wrote his plays with the purpose of entertaining his audiences. While Cato championed and reinforced traditional Roman values, Plautus provided his fellow Romans with an escape “from restraint to release, from censorship to sensuality.”⁹³ So, it is not surprising to find that Plautus never speaks of state freedom. He also never explores inner freedom, an introspection that lends itself more readily to tragedy than comedy. He speaks only of individual freedom. Slaves are omnipresent in his plays, and he is known for his stock

88 Stavros Frangoulidis, S. J. Harrison, and Gesine Manuwald, *Roman Drama and Its Contexts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 1–2; Anna J. Clark, *Divine Qualities: Cult and Community in Republican Rome*, OCM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 76.

89 Erich Segal, *Roman Laughter: The Comedy of Plautus*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 13. He observes that “to appreciate what Plautus's characters are doing we must be aware of what his contemporary Romans were not supposed to do” (p. 11). He goes on to say that “in the world of Plautus, Cato's dictates are always rejected” (p. 39).

90 See also Edward N. O'Neil, “Reviewed Work: Roman Laughter: The Comedy of Plautus by Erich Segal,” *CP* 66, no. 1 (1971).

91 Segal notes that “ancient comedy was presented to an audience which constituted an entire citizenry.” Segal, *Roman Laughter*, ix. In addition, de Melo notes that Plautus varies his language: “Young men do not speak like their fathers, and slaves do not speak like their masters.” Plautus, *Amphitryon*, etc., lxxxiii. Therefore, Plautus may be portraying more of “real life” than some suppose.

92 Elizabeth Rawson argues that comedy “surely represents less the values of the aristocracy than that of the bulk of the audience.” E. Rawson, “Freedmen in Roman Comedy,” in *Theater and Society in the Classical World*, ed. Ruth Scodel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 227. Referenced and discussed in Amy Richlin, “Talking to Slaves in the Plautine Audience,” *CLAnt* 33, no. 1 (2014).

93 Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 41.

character of the clever slave who epitomizes the saturnalian master-slave reversal. Characters regularly identify people as slave or free,⁹⁴ and much is made of the distinction between free and freeborn.⁹⁵ Reminiscent of Homer's *Odyssey*, characters repeatedly distinguish free and slave by their physical characteristics.⁹⁶ In *The Persian*, a girl is said to have "the lovely looks of a free-born girl" (130 [De Melo]). We read in *Pseudolus*: "Harpax: What about you, are you a slave or a free man? Pseudolus: For the time being I'm a slave. Harpax: That's what you look like and you don't look as if you deserve to be free" (610–11 [De Melo]). This last line also touches on the idea that only worthy slaves should be set free. Characters also use the freedom terminology to indicate character.⁹⁷

Even though the clever slave in his plays is bold and outspoken, Plautus also portrays the limited freedom of speech that slaves likely normally experienced. A slave comments when she is alone, "Now I'll say freely at my own discretion what I want and what I like" (*Truc.* 211–12 [De Melo]). And at one point, Plautus portrays how slaves expressed themselves subversively. In *The Captives*, Philocrates, a prisoner of war and nobleman, and his slave, Tyndarus, exchange clothes and places. A man asks Philocrates, "Tell me, do you prefer to be a slave or a free man?" Philocrates replies, "What's closest to good and furthest from evil, that's what I want; but slavery wasn't very troublesome for me, and I wasn't in a different situation from being a son of the house." Tyndarus comments as an aside, "How brilliantly he's adapted his way of speaking to being a slave!" (270–76 [De Melo]). Philocrates appears to be an acquiescent—and thus "good"—slave, but he is actually saying something very different. Slaves did not have freedom of speech, so they found a way to express themselves subversively.

Freedom from slavery is a constant part of the dialogue in Plautus's plays. In *Three Dollar Day*, a man and a slave have a private conversation. When the slave's owner asks what they were talking about, the man covers the actual topic by saying, "What do you expect? He's human; he wants to become free, but doesn't have anything to pay" (563–64 [De Melo]).⁹⁸ There are several references to masters (or a third party) promising to free a slave but not following

94 Of the over 225 occurrences of *liber* and its derivatives in Plautus's plays, over seventy are in the context of distinguishing people as slave or free.

95 *Cas.* 79–83; *Curc.* 620; *Mil. glor.* 488–90, 784, 961–63; *Poen.* 894, 899–900, 961–63, 1239–41, 1344–46; *Rud.* 737–39, 1197–99.

96 *Epid.* 43–44; *Mil. glor.* 968; *Pers.* 545–46.

97 *Amph.* 104–106; *Capt.* 418–19; *Mil. glor.* 63–64; *Rud.* 408–410.

98 See also *Aul.* 309–310; *Poen.* 1205–1207; *Rud.* 927–290.

through (*Merc.* 153–54; *Poen.* 129–37, 359–63). And a slave expresses the Roman idea that slaves who are worthy could be freed (*Cas.* 284–85).⁹⁹

2.2.2 Terence

Suetonius reports that Terence was from Carthage and became the slave of a Roman senator who educated him and set him free because of his “talent and good looks” (*Poet. Vita Terenti*, 1–3 [Rolfe]). He wrote only six plays, dying at the young age of twenty-four. Like his predecessor Plautus, Terence only speaks of individual freedom. Although on one occasion in *The Brothers*, he mentions civic freedom (183). Unlike Plautus’s characters, his characters never refer to the juxtaposition of slave and free when referring to people at large, and there is only one reference to the freeborn (*ingenuus*) in distinction to the free (*liber*) (*Phorm.* 166–70).¹⁰⁰ His characters do, however, use the *liber* terminology to identify free persons¹⁰¹ and give evidence that the Romans associated certain physical qualities with the free (*Eun.* 472–73; *Andr.* 121–23). Terence’s characters most often use the *liber* terminology to indicate good or noble character, as when a slave comments, “The wife, as you would expect from a respectable lady (*liberali*) was modest and restrained” (*Hec.* 164–65 [Barsby]).¹⁰²

In Terence’s plays, slaves do not speak of wanting to be free, and there are only two occasions where slaves are manumitted. In both cases, it is emphasized that the slaves are worthy of their freedom (*Ad.* 959–77; *Andr.* 37–38). In the first reference, however, Terence mocks the idea of what makes a slave worthy of freedom. Demea proposes that Micio set his slave free. When Micio asks why his slave should be set free, Demea responds, “The facts speak for themselves. And there are other things besides: buying food on credit, hiring girls, arranging drinking parties in broad daylight. These are the services of no ordinary person” (964–66 [Barsby]). When the slave asks for his wife to also be set free because she was the first to breastfeed the man’s son, Demea concurs, “For god’s sake, really and truly, if she was the first, there’s no question. It’s only

99 Sharrock makes the observation that “it is surprising how few slaves achieve freedom during the plays,” and that those who do are primarily those who are “freeborn foundlings and captives” rather than the clever slave who is trying to find a way to freedom. Alison Sharrock, “Genre and Social Class, or Comedy and the Rhetoric of Self-Aggrandisement and Self-Deprecation,” in *Roman Drama and Its Contexts*, ed. Stavros Frangoulidis, S. J. Harrison, and Gesine Manuwald (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 99.

100 These lack of references to distinguish people is remarkably different from Plautus, and apparently from the culture at large, and one has to wonder if Terence’s freedman status is informing this silence in his plays.

101 *Ad.* 180, 193–96; *Andr.* 770–71; *Eun.* 805; *Phorm.* 437–39.

102 See also *Ad.* 462–64; *Andr.* 37–38, 119–23, 330–31; *Phorm.* 168–69, 281–82, 368–71, 619–24, 905.

right that she should be given her freedom" (975–77 [Barsby]). It cannot escape our notice that Terence, a former slave now freedman, does not give slaves and manumission the focus that Plautus does in his plays. It raises the question that perhaps Plautus is representing slaves and manumission in a manner that Terence cannot abide.¹⁰³

2.2.3 Summary of the Roman Playwrights

Neither Plautus nor Terence speaks of state or inner freedom in their comedies. It appears that this genre, Roman comedy, did not lend itself to exploring or speaking of these ideas. In these plays, there is a singular focus on individual freedom. In Plautus, characters clearly divide the world into slave and free, and in both Plautus and Terence, characters associate physical beauty with the freeborn. Characters in Plautus make much of the distinction between free and freeborn, where characters in Terence almost never mention it. Characters in both use the *liber* terminology to indicate good or noble character, indicating a moral component to freedom. Freedom of speech—a person being able to speak their mind openly—figures largely in Plautus's plays. Characters in Plautus also speak often of slaves desiring freedom and owners recognizing this desire, with the result that many owners promise freedom but do not follow through in giving it. Characters in both Plautus and Terence indicate that only those slaves who are worthy should be freed. These plays reinforce the idea that manumission did not make ancient slavery more humanitarian but served instead to perpetuate the institution: the owners used the slaves' desire for freedom to incentivize them to work hard and be faithful.¹⁰⁴ Terence does not speak of slaves and manumission as often or in the same manner as Plautus does, and the clear difference in approach begs the question of whether or not his freedman position informs his presentation of slavery and manumission.

2.3 *The Roman Historians*

While many ancient authors wrote histories of Rome, we will focus on Sallust (86–35 BCE), Livy (59 BCE–17 CE), and Tacitus (56–ca. 120 CE). Quintilian

¹⁰³ Sharrock observes that "it can be difficult for subversive literary forms to maintain their subversive stance, in that the very act of subverting can be a form of approbation. If X subverts Y, X makes Y into the standard and so has to work very hard to avoid reinforcing the very hierarchies it seeks to undermine." Sharrock, "Genre and Social Class," 98. It may also reinforce the very stereotypes it is challenging. Terence may have perceived this reinforcement and tried to break away from it.

¹⁰⁴ Notably, it is a character in Terence's play *The Brothers* who states this bluntly. As Demea is arguing for a slave to be manumitted, he states, "It's only right to reward him; it will be an incentive for the others" (968 [Barsby]).

presents as equals Sallust and Thucydides, Livy and Herodotus (*Inst.* 10.1.101), and Martial calls Sallust the “foremost of Roman historians” (*Epigr.* 14.191 [Bailey]).¹⁰⁵ Pliny the Younger, in one of his many correspondences to Tacitus, pronounces, “I believe that your histories will be immortal” (*Ep.* 7.33.1 [Radice]). Sallust was a statesman who lived during the final years of the Roman Republic and Julius Caesar’s rise to power. After his retirement from public life, he wrote his *Catiline* and *Jurgurtha* and his five-book *Histories* (covering 78–67 BCE). Livy, in contrast, was never involved with politics yet was on close terms with Augustus and was a tutor to Claudius. He spent much of his life writing his 142-book history, *From the Foundation of the City*, that traces the history of Rome from its founding through 9 BCE. Tacitus was a lawyer and a statesman who served as a praetor and consul in Rome and proconsul of Asia under the emperors Titus, Domitian, Nerva, and Trajan. He wrote *A Dialogue on Oratory*, but the rest of his works are primarily historical: *Germania*, *Agricola*, *The Annals* (covering 14–68 CE), and *The Histories* (covering 69–96 CE).

2.3.1 Sallust

Sallust lived and wrote during the civil wars of the late Republic. He was involved in the power struggle within the Roman government between the Optimates and the Populares.¹⁰⁶ Both groups of politicians claimed to be defending Roman freedom, but they disagreed on how to structure the government and how much freedom different groups within Roman society should have.¹⁰⁷ So, unlike the Greek historians who spoke primarily of state freedom, Sallust speaks primarily of civic freedom.¹⁰⁸ This political freedom is often juxtaposed with slavery.¹⁰⁹ Sallust portrays Gaius Memmius, a Plebian Tribune associated with the Populares, stirring up the Roman people in a speech, “You will be left in eternal anxiety, when you realize that you must either submit to slavery or use force to maintain your freedom Those men wish to be tyrants, you to be free” (*Bell. Jug.* 31.22–23 [Ramsey]).

Sallust occasionally speaks of freedom in other ways. He mentions manumission from slavery (*Bell. Cat.* 30.6–7). He uses the *liber* terminology to indicate

¹⁰⁵ See also Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.15.19. Foster notes that “Livy shared with Virgil the honour of being the most widely read of Latin writers” (Livy, *History of Rome: Books 1–2*, trans. B. O. Foster, LCL [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919], xxiii).

¹⁰⁶ Ronald Mellor, *The Roman Historians* (London: Routledge, 1999), 46.

¹⁰⁷ Valentina Arena, *Libertas and the Practice of Politics in the Late Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6–9.

¹⁰⁸ *Bell. Cat.* 20.5–7, 33.4–5, 37.9–10, 39.4–5, 52.6, 58.8–12; *Bell. Jug.* 30.3–4, 31.15–17, 42.1; *Hist.* 1.67.3–11, 3.15.1–4, 3.15.19–23.

¹⁰⁹ *Bell. Cat.* 20.14–17; *Hist.* 1.49.2–3, 1.49.6, 1.49.26–27, 3.15.12–13, 3.15.26–27, 4.60.18–19.

moral character¹¹⁰ and freedom of speech (*Bell. Jug.* 95.2). Notably, Sallust uses *liber* only once to indicate people who are free rather than slaves (*Bell. Jug.* 31.9), and he uses the freeborn terminology only once (*Bell. Cat.* 61.5–6).

2.3.2 Livy

Livy was not a politician or military leader but instead has the distinction of being the first “full-time historian.”¹¹¹ He covers over seven hundred years of Roman history, and so it is no surprise that he writes of state freedom.¹¹² The state freedom he references is often that of other cities or nations trying to maintain or reestablish their freedom from Rome.¹¹³ The Romans, however, saw themselves as liberators freeing others from the rule of kings, for “kings wish everything to be enslaved and subject to their will” (37.54.6–7 [Sage]). At the end of the Third Macedonian War, “it was voted that the Macedonians and Illyrians should be given their independence, so that it should be clear to all nations that the forces of the Roman People brought not slavery to free peoples, but on the contrary, freedom to the enslaved” (45.18.1–2 [Schlesinger]). Throughout Livy’s portrayal of state freedom, we see this juxtaposition with slavery.¹¹⁴ And while Rome and other states desired to remain free from the rule of kings, they still maintained the right to rule other cities and states. Livy records that the “the Syracusans had made an alliance with the Romans with the provision that all the states which had been subject to the kings should be under their rule; that now they were not satisfied with freedom, without also being lords and masters” (24.29.7–8 [Moore]).

Livy also writes of individual and civic freedom. During the Republic, these concepts of freedom included freeborn persons not being subjugated to another person (2.28.7–8) and a limited representation in government decisions (3.31.7–8, 5.2.11–12). Throughout his account, Livy portrays the need for freedom to be exercised in moderation. The Roman general in a speech to the Greeks at Corinth advises them that “they should use their liberty with

110 *Bell. Cat.* 52.21–22; *Bell. Jug.* 30.3, 103.5.

111 Mellor, *The Roman Historians*, 60. Mellor notes that “the range of Livy’s interest is much wider than that of the senatorial writers Sallust and Tacitus, who are more focused on political history” (p. 66).

112 One caveat when considering Livy’s concept of freedom as seen in his writing is that much of his *From the Foundation of the City* is lost: of his 142 books, only 1–10 and 21–45 are extant. Nonetheless, Livy uses the freedom terminology over 600 times in these books.

113 7.25.6–7, 10.16.4–6, 21.2.7, 21.30.3–4, 21.52.4–5.

114 34.22.10–13, 34.49.1–7, 34.58.8–13, 35.16.9–12, 37.53.28, 37.54.17–18, 39.37.5–6, 39.37.5–6, 42.52.15–16, 45.22.3–4.

discretion; controlled, it was salutary to individuals and to states; uncontrolled, it was both a burden to others and a source of impetuous and lawless action to its possessors" (34.49.8–9 [Yardley]).¹¹⁵

Like some of his predecessors, Livy divides humankind into free and slave,¹¹⁶ and distinguishes the freeborn from the free.¹¹⁷ He writes of slaves being promised their freedom (21.45.7–8), but sometimes these promises of freedom were slow to come (24.14.3–4). At other times, slaves actually received their freedom, usually as a reward for some type of service.¹¹⁸ Livy uses the freedom terminology to describe free speech¹¹⁹ and positive character.¹²⁰ And on two occasions, he indicates that death is a type of freedom (3.48.5, 40.4.13–14). In the second reference, Livy describes a mother and her children who were being pursued by the enemy. When the mother saw they could not escape, "turning to the crime she had long been planning, [she] mixed the poison and displayed the steel, and placing the cup in sight and drawing the swords, she said, 'Death is the one way to freedom'" (40.4.13–14 [Sage/Schlesinger]).¹²¹

2.3.3 Tacitus

The historical texts of Tacitus cover much of the first century CE. He writes as an elite insider, a statesman dangerously close to the imperial power that limited what freedom he himself experienced. Like Livy, the state freedom Tacitus writes of is usually that of other states defending or trying to reinstate their freedom from Rome.¹²² These states speak of defeat as slavery.¹²³ Because he writes during the Principate, it is not surprising that Tacitus does not speak of civic freedom, except to comment how it is a relic of the past.¹²⁴ Even though

¹¹⁵ See also 24.25.8–9, 39.26.13–14, 45.18.6–7.

¹¹⁶ Of the 600 occurrences of the *liber* terminology, at least fifty refer to people as free versus slave.

¹¹⁷ 3.57.1–4, 6.40.6–7, 8.28.3–4, 10.8.10–11, 10.21.4, 21.62.2–3, 25.5.6–9, 26.13.15–16, 29.17.15–16, 31.17.4–6, 34.45.6–7, 37.3.6–7, 39.8.7–8, 39.19.5–6, 40.18.7.

¹¹⁸ 2.5.9–10, 4.45.1–2, 4.61.10, 22.33.3, 25.6.22, 26.27.6–9, 27.3.6, 32.26.14–15.

¹¹⁹ 3.39.6, 6.16.8, 9.18.7, 24.22.1–2, 26.12.11, 29.17.10–12, 35.32.5–7, 39.25.11–12, 39.40.10–11, 42.13.7–8, 44.36.12.

¹²⁰ 3.50.5–6, 22.11.8–9, 37.34.7–8, 42.38.4–5.

¹²¹ The word used for freedom here, *vindicta*, is the word used to indicate the manumission of a slave by his or her master.

¹²² *Agr.* 30.1; *Ann.* 11.16, 14.31; *Germ.* 37.4, 78; *Hist.* 4.25.

¹²³ *Agr.* 30.2–3; *Ann.* 2.15, 3.45, 4.46.

¹²⁴ *Ann.* 1.33, 74, 77; 2.82. Oliver notes "the bitter irony of Tacitus and his ruthlessness in tearing down the facade of freedom." James Henry Oliver, *Demokratia, the Gods, and the Free World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1960), 160.

he holds this view, he believes (or at least claims to believe) that individual freedom now has more allowance than under previous emperors and asserts that “Nerva has united things long incompatible, the Principate and liberty” (*Agr.* 3.1 [Ogilvie]).

Tacitus rarely divides people into slave and free,¹²⁵ refers to freeborn persons more often,¹²⁶ but regularly mentions freedpersons.¹²⁷ It is therefore not surprising that he writes of the act of manumission itself (*Ann.* 14.54–55). Tacitus reports that the Senate discussed if they should allow patrons to annul the manumission of ungrateful and disrespectful freedpersons (*Ann.* 13.26–27). The Senate decides against this proposal, stating that those freedpersons who are freed in any manner other than by *vindicta* are still under a form of servitude anyway. This decision gives evidence that informal manumission did not provide for full individual freedom. Tacitus also relates the story of a city prefect, Pedanius Secundus, who was murdered by his own slave, perhaps because the slave “had been refused emancipation after Pedanius had agreed to the price” (*Ann.* 14.42 [Jackson]).¹²⁸

When Tacitus speaks of individual freedom other than that achieved by freed slaves, he pictures it as a spirit of independence in juxtaposition to being a sycophant to those in power: “while Labeo’s uncompromising independence (*libertate*) assured him the higher reputation with the public, the pliancy of Capito was more to the taste of princes” (*Ann.* 3.75 [Jackson]).¹²⁹ This independence is always closely related to speaking openly and frankly.¹³⁰ But like many before him, Tacitus shows concern that too much freedom leads to license and thus restraint must be exercised (*Hist.* 2.10; *Dial.* 40.2).¹³¹

125 *Ann.* 5.6, 12.17; *Dial.* 6.2.

126 *Ann.* 4.27.14, 13.27, 15.57, 16.13; *Dial.* 6.2; *Germ.* 20.3, 25.3, 38.2–3, 44.3.

127 Tacitus uses *liber* and its derivatives over 250 times and almost half of those are references to freedpersons, primarily due to the increased involvement and power of the imperial freedmen. See A. M. Duff, *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1928; reprint, Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino, 2007), 150–186; P. R. C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor’s Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

128 This infamous case, which started a public outcry due to the number of slaves involved (400), upheld the ancient law that called for the execution of all the slaves of the household (*Ann.* 14.42–45).

129 See also *Ann.* 3.65, 14.12, 14.49, 16.11; *Hist.* 4.4.

130 *Agr.* 2.3; *Ann.* 13.42, 15.61, 16.24; *Dial.* 10.8, 23.6, 27.3; *Hist.* 1.1, 1.85.

131 But Tacitus did not argue that law was required to provide this restraint. For during the Principate, “law was transformed from an instrument by which the rights and privileges of Romans were protected to become a tool of imperial repression. As Tacitus puts it, the laws put guards over all and became ‘chains’ that were a terror to Romans (*Annales*, 3.28).” Alston, *Aspects of Roman History*, 74.

2.3.4 Summary of the Roman Historians

The Roman historians differ from the poets and the playwrights in that they speak primarily, and perhaps predictably, of state or civic freedom. They write of state freedom as freedom from the rule of a king. Rome, however, still exercises hegemony over other cities and states, and these cities and states view this Roman hegemony as slavery. Sallust and Livy speak of the civic freedom Roman citizens exercise during the Republic. Tacitus, noting that such freedom no longer exists under the Principate, speaks only of the freedom to exercise an independent spirit. Only Livy regularly divides people into slave and free, but both he and Tacitus speak of the freeborn. The historians write of individual freedom but express concern that people exercise it in moderation. They write of bold or frank speech, reflecting the value Romans placed on this type of individual freedom. They also speak of the individual freedom a slave experienced when manumitted, and they use the *liber* terminology in ways that indicate that freedom has a moral component. Livy alone presents death as a type of freedom, and none of the historians speak of inner freedom.

2.4 *The Roman Philosophers*

In the early years of Rome and during the early Republic, Greek philosophy was considered harmful and impractical, and the Senate even expelled philosophers from Rome in 161 BCE.¹³² But in the first centuries BCE and CE, three Greek philosophies were Romanized and became quite influential during that time: Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Cynicism.¹³³ Seneca the Younger (4 BCE–65 CE) is one of our best sources of Roman Stoicism,¹³⁴ and Epictetus (ca. 50–130 CE) gives us a rare glimpse of a freedperson who embraced Stoicism. Cicero (106–43 BCE), in his *On the Nature of the Gods* and *De Finibus*, and Lucretius (ca. 99–ca. 55 BCE), in his *On the Nature of Things*, explain for us the teaching of the Greek philosopher Epicurus.¹³⁵ And Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40–ca. 120 CE) expresses Cynic ideals in some of his later *Discourses*.¹³⁶

132 A. H. M. Jones, *A History of Rome through the Fifth Century*, vol. 1, *The Republic* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 98.

133 Juvenal mentions these three philosophies in one of his satires (*Sat.* 13.120–23). Patterson asserts that these three “schools of thought ... dominated the Hellenistic world.” Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 181.

134 While Cicero is known for his presentation of Stoic philosophy, I will explore the writings of Seneca since he was an actual adherent.

135 Although Cicero did not embrace Epicureanism, he is an important source for this philosophy as he heard the head of the school, Phaedrus, in Rome and the lectures of Zeno in Athens. Cicero, *On Ends*, trans. H. Rackham, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), xii–xiii.

136 Primarily discourses 1, 3, 4, and 6–10. See William D. Desmond, *Cynics*, *Ancient Philosophies* 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 13, 62.

2.4.1 Seneca the Younger and Epictetus: Stoicism

That Seneca would embrace Stoicism and its ideal of inner freedom is perhaps not surprising for he lived during the Principate when Roman state freedom had been established, civic freedom was no longer, and individual freedom, especially for those close to the emperors, was often in peril. He himself was ordered by Nero to commit suicide.

Seneca represents the goal of Stoicism as achieving inner freedom regardless of external circumstances. This inner freedom is primarily a freedom from being ruled by the passions. He writes that “the day a man becomes superior to pleasure, he will also be superior to pain Therefore we must make our escape to freedom” (*Vit. beat.* 4.4–5 [Basore]). Seneca teaches that inner freedom is freedom from emotion (*Ira* 1.19.8), from anger (*Ira* 3.4.4), from fear (*Vit. beat.* 3.4)—especially fear of death and poverty (*Ep.* 80.6)—and freedom from circumstances or fortune (*Ep.* 51.8–9). He writes that the physical body is a prison to the soul (*Ep.* 88.34), and so he urges people to rule their physical bodies, for “to despise our bodies is sure freedom” (*Ep.* 65.22 [Gummere]).

Seneca variously describes the path to this inner freedom as philosophy (*Ep.* 8.7), virtue (*Ep.* 16.1–3), reason (*Ep.* 37.4), wisdom (*Ep.* 88.2), and obedience to *deo* (god) (*Vit. beat.* 15.7). And ultimately, if the circumstances of life are beyond bearing, each person has the option of finding freedom through suicide (*Ira* 3.15.3–4). Seneca repeatedly sets forth Cato, who took his life with his own sword, as the exemplar (*Prov.* 2.9–10; *Ep.* 13.14, 24.7, 95.72). He acknowledges that others consider suicide wrong, but he argues that the “one who says this does not see that he is shutting off the path to freedom. The best thing which eternal law ever ordained was that it allowed to us one entrance into life, but many exits” (*Ep.* 70.14 [Gummere]). A person can choose suicide because they have learned not to fear death, for “death is a release from all suffering, a boundary beyond which our ills cannot pass” (*Marc.* 19.5 [Basore]), and the soul experiences “freedom when it has escaped from this present prison” (*Ep.* 88.34 [Gummere]).

Throughout these discussions of freedom, Seneca terms the opposite slavery. Pleasure and pain enslave (*Vit. beat.* 4.4–5), the person who desires freedom must be a “slave of Philosophy” who will then emancipate them (*Ep.* 8.7 [Gummere]), fear of death is slavery (*Ep.* 26.10), people are slaves to lust, greed, ambition and fear (*Ep.* 47.17), circumstances enslave (*Ep.* 51.8–9), the soul is enslaved by the body (*Ep.* 88.34), and wealth enslaves (*Ep.* 104.34). Seneca also speaks of physical slavery. He never comments if the institution of slavery itself should exist, for that is an external circumstance for which a Stoic is to show no concern and from which suicide can provide a release. “Slavery is no hardship

when, if a man wearies of the yoke, by a single step he may pass to freedom" (*Marc.* 20.3 [Basore]). But on another occasion, he implies that one should choose suicide over slavery. He tells a story of a boy who was enslaved and, when he was asked to do a demeaning chore, took his life by beating his head against a wall. Seneca goes on to comment, "So near at hand is freedom, and is anyone still a slave? Would you not rather have your own son die thus than reach old age by weakly yielding?" (*Ep.* 77.15 [Gummere]).¹³⁷

Epictetus was an adherent and philosopher of Stoicism, but he did not leave any written record of his teaching. We know of his philosophy because one of his students, Flavius Arrian, recorded his classroom conversations.¹³⁸ We do not have a "formal presentation of Stoic philosophy,"¹³⁹ and it is clear that Epictetus was more interested in his students living out Stoicism than merely learning its precepts (*Diatr.* 1.4.18–23, 1.29.55–57).

Perhaps because he was an ex-slave, Epictetus is particularly preoccupied with freedom, and it is central to his philosophy.¹⁴⁰ He reveals how much he values freedom when he asks, "Do you not know that freedom is a noble and precious thing? ... the greatest and indeed highest of all" (*Diatr.* 1.12.12, 15 [Oldfather]).¹⁴¹ He also speaks often of freedom from restraint.¹⁴² Even though Epictetus was a manumitted slave, freedom for him is not individual freedom—for that can be denied a person—but inner freedom. He acknowledges that slaves long for individual freedom, but if even if they are manumitted, they may not attain true freedom (*Diatr.* 2.1.26–28, 4.1.33–40). The key to freedom is understanding what is under your control and what is not under

¹³⁷ Bradley points out that Seneca's audience was not slaves but his fellow slave-owners. He comments that "it is unlikely that the vast majority of Roman slaves, whether domestic servants or agricultural labourers, had much opportunity, or perhaps much inclination, to hear and adopt the lofty Stoic ideals of brotherhood Seneca advanced." Keith R. Bradley, "Seneca and Slavery," in *Seneca*, ed. John G. Fitch, ORCS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 340. So, when Seneca recommends suicide over slavery, he may have had in mind a fellow Roman elite, who by the misfortune of war, had become a slave ("would you not rather have your own son die thus" *Ep.* 77.15), rather than one of his own household slaves. See also Davis, who remarks that Seneca "was far more concerned with the pride of masters than with the sufferings of slaves." Davis, *The Problem of Slavery*, 78.

¹³⁸ Epictetus, *The Discourses: Books 1–2*, trans. W. A. Oldfather, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), xii.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, xv.

¹⁴⁰ Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 341; A. A. Long, "Freedom and Determinism in the Stoic Theory of Human Action," in *Problems in Stoicism*, ed. A. A. Long (London: Athlone, 1971), 191.

¹⁴¹ See also *Diatr.* 4.1.52, 54, 56. All translations of Epictetus in this section are by Oldfather.

¹⁴² *Diatr.* 1.6.40, 3.2.39–40, 4.1.27, 4.1.69.

your control.¹⁴³ People receive external impressions, and they can learn how to properly respond to these impressions.¹⁴⁴ He teaches that “whoever, therefore, wants to be free, let him neither wish for anything, nor avoid anything, that is under the control of others; or else he is necessarily a slave” (*Diatr.* 1.14.2). Slavery for Epictetus is not one person being owned by another person. The person who is a slave is “the man who can be hampered, or subjected to compulsion, or hindered, or thrown into something against his will” (*Diatr.* 4.1.128).

According to Epictetus, it is God himself who controls each person’s life, so a person finds freedom through accepting God’s providence: “He wills that I shall have a fever; it is my will too. He wills that I should choose something; it is my will too He does not will it; I do not wish it” (*Diatr.* 4.1.89–90). Epictetus, however, embraced the Stoic idea that suicide was an option left open to people.¹⁴⁵ And they could choose this option because there was nothing to fear in death—the body simply returned to the physical elements from which it was made. “There is no Hades, nor Acheron, nor Cocytus, nor Pyriphlegethon” (*Diatr.* 3.13.14–15).

2.4.2 Cicero and Lucretius: Epicureanism

Although better known as a statesman and orator, in his later life Cicero wrote on philosophy.¹⁴⁶ In *On the Nature of the Gods* he presents how the Epicurean, Stoic, and Academic schools understood the gods. In this treatise, Velleius represents the Epicurean viewpoint, and he asserts that while the gods ought to receive man’s worship, there is no reason for man to fear them (1.45). He continues to explain that “Epicurus has set us free from superstitious terrors and delivered us out of captivity, so that we have no fear of beings who, we know, create no trouble for themselves and seek to cause none to others” (1.56 [Rackham]). In Book 1 of Cicero’s *On Ends*, Torquatus presents and defends the Epicurean view of ethics in a conversation that purportedly took place at Cicero’s estate in Cumae (1.5.13–14). Epicurus held that pleasure is the chief good (1.9.29.11–30.1), with pleasure being defined as freedom from pain

143 *Diatr.* 1.19.2, 1.22.10, 3.26.34–35, 4.1.83, 4.7.8–9.

144 *Diatr.* 1.1.10–12, 2.18.27–28. Epictetus explains that “you must utterly wipe out desire, and must turn your aversion toward the things which lie within the province of the moral purpose, and these only; you must feel no anger, no rage, no envy, no pity; no wench must look fine to you, no petty reputation, no boy-favourite, no little sweet-cake” (*Diatr.* 3.22.13).

145 *Diatr.* 3.13.14, 3.24.71, 3.24.101.

146 Long asserts that “Cicero never laid claim to any special expertise in philosophy, but no Roman of his time, with the possible exception of Varro, was better equipped to write about it.” A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 229.

(1.11.37.12). But if pain becomes unbearable, “we may serenely quit life’s theater, when the play has ceased to please us” (1.15.49.13–15 [Rackham]). People can choose suicide because “a thorough knowledge of the facts of nature relieves us of the burden of superstition, frees us from fear of death” (1.19.63.9–11 [Rackham]).

Lucretius, who embraced the Epicurean philosophy, presents his understanding of it in his *On the Nature of Things*. He sets about to explain the material world apart from the involvement of the gods (1.155–158), but he insists he is not being impious (1.80–81). His goal is rather to show that people should not fear the gods. He also explains the nature of a person’s soul and argues that it does not continue to exist after the body dies (3.558–579). Therefore, people should not fear death (3.830–831), for “we may be sure that there is nothing to be feared after death, that he who is not cannot be miserable” (3.866–67 [Smith]).

2.4.3 Dio Chrysostom: Cynicism

Dio began his young adult life as a sophist, but when he was exiled by Domitian, he took on the life of a Cynic philosopher.¹⁴⁷ Cynicism was individualistic rather than an organized philosophical movement. In the Roman era Stoics often embraced some Cynic tenets; nevertheless, Cynicism had some defining ideals. Dio writes of the Cynic tenets of individual freedom, which involved living the ascetic life, speaking boldly, and living free of social expectations.¹⁴⁸ He writes that those in poverty experience freedom, while those who have wealth are always consumed with preserving it or acquiring more (*Serv.* 8, 16; *Tyr.* 34; *Ven.* 66, 103).¹⁴⁹ Dio calls the lack of inner freedom slavery (4 *Regn.* 60, 75, 104, 115). He also writes of physical slavery.¹⁵⁰ When an owner is pursuing a runaway slave, Dio challenges his purpose for doing so and asserts that either the slave was bad or the owner mistreated him. Either way, Dio advises the owner not to pursue the slave, but rather to let him go (*Serv.* 2–6). The owner replies that

147 Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses 1–11*, trans. J. W. Cohoon, LCL 257 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), ix–x.

148 Desmond summarizes the Cynic philosophy by saying that it “was a philosophy of radical individual freedom, but freedom won at the cost of a hard, ascetic lifestyle and a shameless flouting of social conventions.” Desmond, *Cynics*, 11. Patterson comments that “Cynicism is the most extreme version of personal freedom that the West has ever seen.” Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 184.

149 Since Dio Chrysostom wrote in Greek, the lexical searches were done using *TLG*.

150 In discourses 14 and 15, *On Slavery and Freedom 1 and 11*, Dio discusses physical slavery through a Stoic lens. See Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses 12–30*, trans. J. W. Cohoon, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 123. Like many during the Roman era, Dio embraced elements from both philosophical systems.

he has no other slave, implying that having at least one slave was necessary for managing life (*Serv.* 8). Dio responds that slaves, like wealth and property, bring worry and concern, so it better to live without them (*Serv.* 8–13).¹⁵¹

2.4.4 Summary of the Roman Philosophers

Stoicism, as represented by Seneca and Epictetus, and Epicureanism, as represented by Cicero and Lucretius, both focus on inner freedom. Stoicism sought inner freedom by ruling the self and the passions, by showing no concern for external circumstances, and by knowing what things are under a person's control. Epicureanism sought inner freedom by seeking pleasure, defined as freedom from pain, and by dispelling the fear of the gods and of death. For both, if circumstances became unbearable, a person had the choice to end his own life. Cynicism, as represented by Dio Chrysostom, focuses on individual freedom. Cynicism sought freedom through asceticism, bold speech, and shameless disregard of social constraints and expectations. Seneca and Dio repeatedly picture slavery as the opposite of freedom, but neither appear particularly concerned about the freedom of actual slaves. The freedman Epictetus acknowledges the desire slaves have for individual freedom but argues that inner freedom is the only true freedom.

2.5 *Summary of Roman Concepts of Freedom*

This section began with some scholarly assertions that while Rome borrowed her idea of freedom from Greece, she changed it in the process—that an ancient Roman would not have understood freedom in the same way an ancient Greek did. To determine if the assertions are valid and exactly how ancient Romans conceived of freedom, we have explored some of the significant Roman literature written during the Roman Republic and early Principate. We have listened to how Roman poets, playwrights, historians, and philosophers spoke of freedom.

When freedom is viewed through these different genres, we discover that the Roman literature serves as a sort of prism, and the different genres highlight different aspects of freedom. The Roman poets write of state and individual freedom, but rarely of inner freedom. The playwrights have a singular focus on individual freedom. The Roman historians, like their Greek predecessors, focus on state freedom, but more particularly civic freedom. And the

151 While Dio might be implying that a slave could run away and thus “free himself” and experience the Cynic’s coveted individual freedom, it is questionable whether he, as an elite, fully considered the question from a slave’s point of view, discourses 14 and 15 notwithstanding.

philosophers write about both inner freedom and individual freedom. These authors and genres give evidence, once again, that there were multiple ways an ancient Roman understood freedom.

The historical genre is the only one that focuses on and explores civic freedom in any depth. It is this understanding of freedom that scholars often highlight as different between Greece and Rome. Greece, or more specifically Athens, was a democracy where Rome before the Principate was a republic. In addition, only a freeborn male Athenian could be a citizen in Athens, where citizenship in Rome was open to men and women, freeborn and freedpersons, natives and people taken into Roman territories.¹⁵² The historians reveal that ancient Romans did indeed conceive of civic freedom differently than ancient Greeks.

But was civic freedom the primary understanding of freedom for the average ancient Roman? This question reminds us that to attempt to identify the viewpoint of the average Roman is a challenge. The literature we have explored is primarily, if not entirely, the work of educated and elite men. That said, we can observe that civic freedom was not the primary understanding of freedom for even these writers. The poets, playwrights, and philosophers speak of freedom in a variety of ways, but their focus is not on civic freedom.

Like their predecessors, the Roman authors continue to divide people into slave and free, but they go one step further and divide the free into free (*liber*, which included freedpersons) and freeborn (*ingenuus*). The Romans had terminology to indicate freedpersons, but they seem more intent than the Greeks to maintain a difference between one who had always been free and one who had once been a slave. Like the Greeks, our Roman authors use the freedom terminology to indicate character and that only the worthy slave is to be freed. Even as they speak of free persons who act ignobly—often described as slavish—they reflect the Roman ideal that to be free is to be honorable and noble. If this is a change from the Greek understanding of freedom, it is only in degree. The Greeks and Romans shared the same ideal, but Rome made this ideal more prominent.

But again, was a moral and free individual the epitome of freedom to the average ancient Roman? Our elite writers answer our question in one of two ways. First, some of our authors respond to the moral component. The Roman

¹⁵² Peter Lampe notes that “for the Romans, it seemed easier to grant citizenship because citizenship did not automatically entail participation in political power.” Peter Lampe, “Concepts of Freedom in Antiquity: Pagan Philosophical Traditions in the Greco-Roman World,” in *Quests for Freedom: Biblical—Historical—Contemporary*, ed. Michael Welker (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2015), 120n20.

playwrights mocked Cato's moral constraints, Ovid appeared to chafe under the Augustan moral reforms, and the Cynics brazenly defied social norms and expectations. But the playwrights created a world that ended when the play was finished, Augustus sent Ovid into exile, and the Cynics were never a mainstream movement. Nevertheless, if even these few elite and educated writers desired a moral freedom not circumscribed by the majority, then we are left to wonder how many of the voiceless masses would echo their desire. So, while many of our authors argue that freedom must be constrained—by the law if necessary—we observe that there were Romans who perceived such constraint as unwanted and a breach of freedom.¹⁵³

Returning to the question, other authors respond to the external component. These authors argue that true freedom is found within. The Stoics voice the idea that only the wise person is free: a person finds freedom by ruling his or her passions, by showing no concern for external circumstances, and by knowing what things are under his or her control. The Epicureans redefine pleasure as freedom from pain. They also find freedom through knowledge: understanding the natural world dispels fear of the gods and understanding that the soul dies with the body dispels fear of death. These philosophers argue that external circumstances do not determine true freedom, and when these circumstances become unbearable, suicide is a viable option.

Surely this ideal of inner freedom appealed to the many Romans who had little control over the external circumstances of their lives, especially the slaves. So we ask: Did slaves—those who were most desperate for freedom—embrace this inner view of freedom? Epictetus, the freedman who embraced Stoicism, gives evidence that some did. He, himself, however obviously accepted and took advantage of his manumission, and he writes of slaves desiring individual freedom.¹⁵⁴ Horace, the son of a freedman, also gives voice to Stoicism, but he seems to desire freedom even from the patronage system. Ovid writes of the hope that slaves harbor for individual freedom. Plautus writes of slaves desiring and asking for their freedom and owners recognizing this desire. Even Seneca, who is admittedly not consistent on this point, comments that it is

153 Brunt comments that “laws might either guarantee or deny men the right to act as they wished, and it cannot be concluded that all Romans accepted that legal restraint was inherent in the very idea of freedom.” P. A. Brunt, “*Libertas* in the Republic,” in *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays*, ed. P. A. Brunt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 318.

154 Patterson argues that there is evidence in Epictetus's writings, if only indirectly, that he had difficulty reconciling the realities of slavery and Stoic philosophy. See Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 279–80. With Epictetus's unique focus on freedom and freedom from restraint, Patterson may be correct.

better to commit suicide and find freedom through death than to remain in physical slavery. This evidence, sparse though it may be, indicates that slaves valued individual freedom.¹⁵⁵ While some may have embraced inner freedom, we have no evidence that these slaves turned down manumission because inner freedom was sufficient. So, while many today focus on the ideal of civic freedom that Rome crafted, or the inner freedom that the Romanized philosophies extolled, Rome's enslaved masses longed for individual freedom, and those who were not enslaved saw their individual freedom as integral to who they were.¹⁵⁶

3 Jewish Concepts of Freedom

Scholars who study the Jewish concept of freedom typically begin with the Hebrew Scriptures and come to one of two very different conclusions before moving on to other texts. One conclusion is that the Jewish Scriptures do not reflect a concept of freedom. Some are looking for political freedom and find no concept of it in the Hebrew Scriptures.¹⁵⁷ Others study the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and determine that there is no "theology of freedom," but rather one of redemption¹⁵⁸ or service/slavery to God.¹⁵⁹ The other conclusion is that the Jewish Scriptures do indeed reflect a concept of freedom.¹⁶⁰ Michael Walzer, one of many scholars who embrace liberation theology, asserts that

¹⁵⁵ Patterson argues that "the most important influence of the freedmen on Roman secular values [was] the fact that they made the idea of personal freedom the dominant one among the Roman masses." Patterson, *Freedom in the Making*, 245.

¹⁵⁶ As Hurtado notes, "in this ironic situation of ubiquitous slavery and universal abhorrence of being a slave, to be 'free' meant, most commonly and explicitly, not to be a slave." He goes on to say that "in short, slavery is the key cultural factor that defined 'freedom' in the Roman world." Larry W. Hurtado, "Freed by Love and for Love: Freedom in the New Testament," in *Quests for Freedom: Biblical—Historical—Contemporary*, ed. Michael Welker (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2015), 211, 212.

¹⁵⁷ Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 129; Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom*, 4, 284n17.

¹⁵⁸ F. Stanley Jones, "Freedom," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 855.

¹⁵⁹ Jon D. Levenson, "Exodus and Liberation," *HBT* 13, no. 2 (1991): 152; Norbert Lohfink, "פְּדֻתָּהּ," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 118; Martin Ostwald, "Freedom and the Greeks," in *The Origins of Modern Freedom in the West*, ed. Richard W. Davis (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 43.

¹⁶⁰ Daniel C. Snell, *Flight and Freedom in the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

there is a concept of freedom developed in the Exodus account.¹⁶¹ Others argue that this concept is found in additional texts of the Hebrew Scriptures as well.¹⁶² There is more consensus that a concept of freedom develops in some of the texts of the Second Temple Jewish literature, Philo, and Josephus.¹⁶³

Norbert Lohfink, in his article defining the Hebrew terms translated as “free” or “freedom,” asserts that “nowhere is the modern concept of freedom attained.”¹⁶⁴ I am not searching, however, for either the modern concept of freedom (however Lohfink might have defined it) or indeed for just one primary or particular concept of freedom. I am searching for how an ancient Jewish person might conceive of freedom, with the recognition that just as there were various Greek and Roman perceptions of freedom, there will likely be various Jewish perceptions of freedom.

This search for a Jewish understanding of freedom is more complicated because the sources are in more than one language and they fall into different genre categories than that of the Greek and Roman sources. Because the Jewish people considered the Hebrew Scriptures authoritative for their community, I will examine these texts as a group rather than dividing them into different genres.¹⁶⁵ The Hebrew terms I will focus on are the following words for “free” and “freedom”: חֲפֵשׁ, חֲפֵשָׁה, חֲפֵשָׁה and דָּרוֹר. I will also consider where the Septuagint translators chose to use ἐλεύθερος and its derivatives when

161 Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

162 Jan Christian Gertz, “Concepts of Freedom in Deuteronomy?” in *Quests for Freedom: Biblical—Historical—Contemporary*, ed. Michael Welker (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2015); Manfred Oeming, “‘To be a Free Nation’: Myth, Ritual, and Ethics of Freedom in the Old Testament as Political Encouragement,” in *Quests for Freedom: Biblical—Historical—Contemporary*, ed. Michael Welker (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2015).

163 Betz, *Paul’s Concept of Freedom*, 20; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 2014); Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.*, trans. David Smith (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989); Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 363; Jones, “Freedom,” 856.

164 Lohfink, “חֲפֵשָׁה,” 117.

165 The discussion continues as to how and when the Hebrew Scriptures were canonized, thus determining which texts were considered authoritative. However, there does seem to be a general consensus that the Hebrew text was stabilized by the end of the first century CE, and that the canon was closed around that same timeframe. Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 66; Shemaryahu Talmon, *Text and Canon of the Hebrew Bible: Collected Studies* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 84.

rendering the original Hebrew into Greek.¹⁶⁶ I will then explore the following genres of Jewish literature: Rewritten Bible,¹⁶⁷ history, and philosophy.

There is some Jewish literature, however, that I will not evaluate in the following sections. First, I will not examine the Rabbinic literature as the question of dating is problematic and most of the material is later than the first century CE. There are only two passages that include the freedom terminology and likely reflect very early Jewish tradition.¹⁶⁸ They both address the same issue of a male who is half-slave and half-free. Since he is not able to marry a slave woman or a free woman, the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai come to agreement that the master who still partially owns him must set him free in exchange for a bond that the slave posts (*m. Git.* 4:5; *m. 'Ed.* 1:13).¹⁶⁹ Second, the unique literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls—that which is not the Hebrew Scriptures or Second Temple literature—has only two references to freedom that are not reconstructions. Both refer to the freedom associated with the year of Jubilee.¹⁷⁰

As noted in the previous two sections, it is difficult to hear the voices of all but the elite and educated when we read ancient literature. But in the Jewish literature, we may come closer to hearing other voices. The Hebrew Scriptures are not primarily written by kings or their scribes.¹⁷¹ Catherine Hezser asserts that the “ancient Jewish literary sources do not reflect the upper-class view

166 Jobs and Silva remind us that there is not one Septuagint, but rather many Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures. See Karen H. Jobs and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 14–17. They note that “the Pentateuch was originally translated in Alexandria around 250 BCE, and the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures were translated within the following two or three centuries” (p. 13). I will be referencing Rahlfs’s text as accessed in the computer software BibleWorks 9.0.

167 Rewritten Bible is a genre first proposed by Géza Vermès in 1961. Géza Vermès, “The Genesis of the Concept of ‘Rewritten Bible,’” in *Rewritten Bible After Fifty Years: A Last Dialogue with Geza Vermes*, ed. József Zsengellér (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 3. I will comment more on this genre in that section.

168 Both passages record disputes between the Houses of Hillel and Shammai, and Instone-Brewer dates such disputes pre-70 CE. David Instone-Brewer, *Prayer and Agriculture, Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament 1* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 31–32. The lexical searches in the Mishnah were done using Chayim Yehoshua Kasovsky, *Thesaurus Mishnae: Concordantiae verborum quae in sex Mishnae ordinibus reperiuntur*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Massadah, 1956).

169 The passage often quoted in regards to freedom, *m. 'Avot* 6:2 (“only the person who learns Torah is free”), is too late for our purposes—probably early third century CE.

170 1QS 10:8 and 4Q258 9:6, which are the same passage; 11QMelch 2:6. The Hebrew term in all three texts is דָּרוּר. The lexical searches in the Dead Sea Scrolls were done using Martin G. Abegg, James E. Bowley, and Edward M. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance*, vol. 1, pt. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

171 Snell, *Flight and Freedom*, 118.

only but were more variegated in their perspective.”¹⁷² And note once again that this survey of genres and authors is representative rather than exhaustive, with the goal of discovering the various conceptions of freedom expressed by ancient Jews. So, with these caveats in mind, we will work through a selection of ancient Jewish literature, listening to how these Jewish authors talked about the concept of freedom.

3.1 *The Hebrew Scriptures and the Septuagint*

The Hebrew Scriptures are traditionally divided into three sections: Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. The New Testament texts, however, most often simply refer to two divisions: the Law and the Prophets.¹⁷³ Since our ultimate goal is to understand how Paul and those he was writing to in Galatia understood the concept of freedom, we will examine the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures by this two-fold division that is reflected in the first-century writings of the New Testament.¹⁷⁴

3.1.1 The Law

The primary Hebrew terms for “free” and “freedom” (חֲפָזִי, חֲפָזִי, חֲפָזִי and חֲפָזִי) are found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.¹⁷⁵ In all references except one, they indicate the individual freedom a slave receives when he or she is manumitted. This manumission may take place due to the time limit set by the Law (a Hebrew slave could serve only six years: Exod 21:2; Deut 15:12, 18), due to a man no longer desiring his concubine (Exod 21:7–11),¹⁷⁶ or due to a slave being harmed (losing an eye or a tooth: Exod 21:26–27). The Septuagint translators render the Hebrew terms in all these references with ἐλεύθερος or ἐλευθερία. There is one reference to individual freedom that includes more than manumission: Leviticus 25:10 speaks of “the fiftieth year” (known as Jubilee) where slaves receive their freedom, but also where individuals who were in

¹⁷² Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 13. Nonetheless, she goes on to observe that none of the sources were written by slaves or from their viewpoint.

¹⁷³ Matt 5:17, 7:12, 11:13, 22:40; Luke 16:16, 29, 31 and 24:27; John 1:45; Acts 13:15, 24:14, 26:22, 28:23; Rom 3:21. The only three-fold division is found in Luke 24:44.

¹⁷⁴ For further discussion of this two-fold division, see John Barton, *The Old Testament: Canon, Literature and Theology: Collected Essays of John Barton*, SOTSMS (Aldershot: Routledge, 2007), 7–10.

¹⁷⁵ All lexical searches in the Hebrew Scriptures were done using the computer software BibleWorks 9.0.

¹⁷⁶ Deuteronomy 21:10–14 describes a similar situation, but the Hebrew terminology for “setting free” is absent, saying simply that the man must let her go (וְהָרַחֵץ). The Septuagint, however, translates the passage adding ἐλεύθερος: “send her out free” (ἐξαποστελεῖς αὐτήν ἐλευθέραν).

debt regain their property. The Hebrew term here is דָּרַר, and the Septuagint translator renders it with ἄφεσις, meaning “to let go” or “release,” rather than ἐλεύθερος. It is worth noting that in the books of the Law, the only terms that the Septuagint translators render with ἐλεύθερος and its derivatives are חָפְשִׁי, חֲפָשִׁי, and חֲפָשִׁי.

The account of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt does not use the Hebrew terms listed above. The description instead is consistently like that found first in Exod 13:3, “And Moses said to the people, ‘Remember this day in which you went out (יָצָאתֶם) from Egypt, from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand the Lord brought you out (הוֹצִיא) from this place.’”¹⁷⁷ Many argue that since the freedom terminology is absent, the concept of freedom is also absent.

A concept can be present, however, even when specific terminology is missing. But is that the case here? If we examine the passage in Exodus 21:2 on manumission, we find the same terminology of “going out” (יָצָא): “When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free (יָצָא לְחֻפְשֵׁי), for nothing” (ESV).¹⁷⁸ In this passage, the slave goes out into a state of freedom as a free person. Exodus 13:3 speaks of the location from which the Israelites went out: from a house of slavery. This verse seems to indicate that the Israelites too go out as free people, no longer slaves. Some scholars, however, look at a passage like Lev 25:42, “For they are my servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt,” and assert that the Israelites simply pass from one master (Pharaoh) to another (God).¹⁷⁹ But if we read a little further in Leviticus, we hear God proclaiming, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you should not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect” (26:13). This passage evokes the concept of being set free. The Israelites had been released in order to serve God, but service to God is not pictured as a type of continued slavery. While redemption is the means by which God brought Israel out, and service is the purpose for which he brought them out, freedom is the result.¹⁸⁰ These three

177 See also Exod 13:14, 20:2; Deut 6:12, 7:8, 8:14. I will be using the NASB translation in this section unless otherwise noted.

178 See also Lev 25:39–43. This passage may be even more significant because the freedom terminology is missing but obviously implied, as it is in Exod 21:3–4.

179 Levenson, “Exodus and Liberation,” 152; Lohfink, “חֲפָשִׁי,” 118; Ostwald, “Freedom and the Greeks,” 43.

180 Patrick Miller comments that “freeing Israel from servitude in Egypt is tied from the beginning in every way to a freedom for serving the Lord.” Patrick D. Miller, “God’s Work for Human Freedom,” in *Quests for Freedom: Biblical—Historical—Contemporary*, ed. Michael Welker (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2015), 186.

things—redemption, service, and freedom—work together; there is no need to embrace one understanding and exclude the others.

So, we see in the Law the individual freedom a slave experienced when manumitted and the individual freedom enhanced when a person was released from debt. As noted earlier, scholarship is not in agreement on whether the Exodus story reflects a concept of freedom. We are not, however, searching for how scholars today understand the Exodus story, but how a Jewish person in the first century CE would have understood the story. To discover this first-century understanding, we will have to look to other texts for possible answers.

To this end, we can begin with the Septuagint and observe that the Greek translators did not use ἐλεύθερος and its derivatives in their rendering of the Exodus story from the original Hebrew. But since the Hebrew text did not use freedom terminology, it is not particularly significant that the Greek text lacks it also. We can at least make the observation that if the Exodus story reflects a concept of freedom, and I suggest that it does, it is that of both individual freedom (individual Israelites were no longer living as slaves) and state freedom (the Israelites as a people were no longer under foreign rule), with the first dependent upon the second.

3.1.2 The Prophets

The Hebrew terms for “free” and “freedom” are rare in the Prophets. In Jeremiah, all references are to the individual freedom a slave experiences when he or she is manumitted (34:8–11, 14–17). In Isaiah, references are to the “oppressed” (58:6) and the “captives” (61:1) being set free, indicating again people who experience individual freedom. Ezekiel calls the year of Jubilee the “year of freedom” (46:17), referencing the time when Hebrew slaves were to be freed and land was to be returned to families. Job describes death as a place where the slave is free from his master (3:19), and the psalmist laments that he is “set free” among the dead (88:5).¹⁸¹ Job also speaks of setting the wild donkey free (39:5).

The Septuagint translators show more variation in the Prophets in how they render these Hebrew terms into Greek. As in the books of the Law, דָּרוֹר is translated with ἄφεσις rather than ἐλεύθερος. It is worth noting that in all the passages where the Septuagint translators render דָּרוֹר as ἄφεσις,¹⁸² the

181 Psalm 88:5 is difficult to interpret, leading to various translations of this term: “set loose” (ESV), “forsaken” (NASB), “adrift” (NET).

182 The Hebrew term can also mean “sparrow” or “flowing,” so when used with those meanings the Greek translators obviously used other Greek terms.

reference is always to a proclamation of freedom (Isa 61:1; Jer 34:8, 15, 17) or to the fiftieth year (Jubilee) when this nationwide release was to take place (Ezek 46:17); it therefore has a collective connotation.¹⁸³ Perhaps the collective idea influenced the choice of a different Greek word. In Jeremiah 34:9–16, Psalm 88:5, and Job 39:5 the translators render the other Hebrew terms, when translated, with ἐλεύθερος. In Isaiah 58:6, the translator renders the Hebrew term with ἄφεσις, perhaps because this verse may be an oblique reference to Jubilee or at least actions that were to take place at that time. Finally, the translator of Job 3:19 renders the Hebrew with δέιδω, meaning “to fear.” Thus, the verse in Greek, rather than saying the slave is free from his master in death, says that the slave does not fear his master in death.¹⁸⁴

There is one other Hebrew word that the Septuagint translators often render with ἐλεύθερος and that is the word נָכִיחַ when it has the meaning “a noble person.” For example, we read in 1 Kings 21:8 that Jezebel “wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal, and sent letters to the elders (אֲלֵהֵזְקִיָּים) and to the nobles (אֲנָשֵׁי הַחֵירוֹת) who were living with Naboth in his city” (see also 21:11). The Septuagint translator renders “the elders” as τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους but “the nobles” as τοὺς ἐλευθέρους. In Nehemiah, the term for nobles is usually rendered with ἔντιμος (2:16, 4:14, 4:19, 5:7, 6:17, 7:5), but in 13:17 the translator renders it with ἐλεύθερος. And in Ecclesiastes 10:17, the term is rendered with ἐλεύθερος. So, while we see that the Greek language obviously has a term for nobles, ἔντιμος, the Greek translators are reflecting what we saw in the previous sections: the use of the freedom terminology to indicate noble characteristics. Here, the terminology even refers to noble people themselves.

3.1.3 Summary of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Septuagint

The Hebrew Scriptures refer primarily to individual freedom. They speak of the freedom a slave experienced when manumitted, the enhanced freedom a person experienced when family lands were restored, and the freedom that slaves and indebted persons experienced collectively that was to take place at Jubilee. In addition, a few texts seem to speak of some type of freedom found in death. If a first century CE Jewish person understood the Exodus of the Israelites to reflect a concept of freedom, it would reflect both individual

183 See also North who renders the term as “emancipation” rather than “manumission.” R. North, “נָכִיחַ,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 265.

184 While the translator may have been making an interpretive move here, there is also the possibility that he had a different Vorlage of the Hebrew text from which he was translating.

freedom (as the individual Israelites were no longer slaves) and state freedom (as the Israelites were no longer under a foreign country's rule). The Septuagint reflects these same concepts of freedom, with one addition: the use of the freedom language to indicate a moral connotation, indicating to be free was to be noble.

3.2 *The Rewritten Bible Literature*

The "Rewritten Bible" is a term first coined by Géza Vermès in 1961 to refer to both a genre of literature and the process by which this literature was created.¹⁸⁵ Exactly which texts are included in this genre depends upon the scholar consulted and how he or she defines the genre. The narrow definition of this genre, following Vermès, is literature "in which a significant portion of text is interpretatively rewritten but largely retains the antecedent's sequence and structure," with the antecedent text being a biblical text.¹⁸⁶ Based on this definition, the texts that we will examine are 1 Esdras, Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, and Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* 1–11.¹⁸⁷ The importance of this literature is that it shows us how the Jews who wrote it were interpreting their Scriptures.

185 Vermès, "The Genesis of the Concept of 'Rewritten Bible,'" 8. He describes the process as "an exegetical process" where "the midrashist inserts haggadic development into the biblical narrative." Géza Vermès, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies*, 2nd, rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 95. To explore the topic of Rewritten Bible, see Moshe J. Bernstein, "Rewritten Bible': A Generic Category Which Has Outlived Its Usefulness?" in *Reading and Re-Reading Scripture at Qumran*, vol. 1, STDJ, vol. 107 (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Sidnie White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times*, SDSS (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Daniel J. Harrington, "The Bible Rewritten (Narratives)," in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Robert A. Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg, *The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters*, vol. 2 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986); Michael Segal, "Between Bible and Rewritten Bible," in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, ed. Matthias Henze, SDSS (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); József Zsengellér, ed., *Rewritten Bible After Fifty Years: A Last Dialogue with Geza Vermes*, vol. 166, JSJSup (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

186 Jonathan G. Campbell, "Rewritten Bible: A Terminological Reassessment," in *Rewritten Bible After Fifty Years: A Last Dialogue with Geza Vermes*, ed. József Zsengellér (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 54.

187 For classification of these texts as Rewritten Bible see David A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 280; Anders K. Petersen, "Reflections on the Phenomenon of Rewritten Scripture," in *Rewritten Bible After Fifty Years: A Last Dialogue with Geza Vermes*, ed. József Zsengellér (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 21, 27. Two pseudepigraphal texts also fall into this narrow definition, Jubilees and the Martyrdom of Isaiah, but both are only complete in an Ethiopic text.

3.2.1 1 Esdras

First Esdras was likely composed during the second or first century BCE.¹⁸⁸ It “rewrites” 2 Chronicles 35–36, Ezra, and Nehemiah 8, relocates some verses, and includes “The Debate of the Three Bodyguards.” This text only uses the freedom terminology three times, and all three references occur in the expansion story about the three bodyguards.¹⁸⁹ The terminology is used once to divide people into slave and free. The other two references appear to speak about individual freedom. First, Darius guarantees the Jews returning to Jerusalem that, “in the interest of their freedom,” no government official could “forcibly enter their doors” (4:49, NRSV). Then he says that those returning to build their city, along with their children and the priests, “should have their freedom” (4:53, NRSV). Since the Jews were still under the hegemony of Persia, state freedom is not in purview, only individual freedom. The freedom terminology, however, is not used in the biblical text of Ezra or Nehemiah when speaking of the return from exile. So we see here that some Jews in the second and first century BCE conceived of the return from exile in terms of freedom.

3.2.2 “Biblical Antiquities”

Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities* was probably composed in the first century CE, likely before the destruction of the temple in 70 CE.¹⁹⁰ This text “rewrites” the story from Adam to David, “interweav[ing] biblical incidents and legendary expansions of these accounts.”¹⁹¹ The extant copies are all in Latin, and the Latin term for freedom, *liber*, and its derivatives are found throughout.¹⁹² There is consensus, however, that this text was originally written in Hebrew, then translated into Greek, and later into Latin.¹⁹³ So while the original Hebrew text may have been composed in the first century CE, it is doubtful that the Latin translation took place in the first century, especially considering that the Latin translation is dependent upon a Greek translation.

The Latin translator of Pseudo-Philo never uses the freedom terminology to divide people into slave and free or to refer to freedom itself. We find instead

188 DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 284.

189 Lexical searches were done using the computer software BibleWorks 9.0.

190 Daniel J. Harrington, “Biblical Text of Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*,” *CBQ* 33, no. 1 (1971): 17.

191 James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 2.297.

192 Lexical searches were done using Wilfried Lechner-Schmidt, *Wortindex der lateinisch erhaltenen Pseudepigraphen zum Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Francke, 1990).

193 Tavis A. Bohlinger, “The Akedah in Pseudo-Philo: A Paradigm of Divine–Human Reciprocity,” *JSP* 25, no. 3 (2016): 191n7.

that the translator uses the terminology consistently to refer to the action of delivering or setting free an individual or Israel as a people. In one of the expansions, the just are said to be freed when they die (51.5). In two passages, God acts through an individual to free Israel from her enemies (35.4, 42.3). These two references are from biblical passages (Judg 6:14 and 13:5, respectively), but the term used in the original Hebrew text is one meaning “to save, deliver,” not one of the terms for setting free that we have been tracing.¹⁹⁴ God himself is usually the one portrayed as setting an individual free from life-threatening circumstances (6.9, 6.11, 32.1, 47.1) or freeing Israel from her enemies (18.11, 27.7, 39.4, 39.11, 40.2, 49.8). All of these references are from expansions of the text, and so there are no direct biblical parallels. Finally, the translator also refers to God freeing the Israelites from Egypt (9.16, 10.1, 19.9, 23.9). These too are found in expansions of the biblical text.

3.2.3 “Jewish Antiquities” 1–11

Josephus composed his *Jewish Antiquities* in 93–94 CE.¹⁹⁵ In the first eleven books, he “rewrites” the entire biblical narrative, “incorporat[ing] a miscellaneous mass of traditional lore.”¹⁹⁶ Josephus uses ἐλευθερος and its derivatives regularly throughout this narrative.¹⁹⁷ He divides people into free and slave,¹⁹⁸

194 In Harrington's English translation of Pseudo-Philo, he indicates the biblical parallels and notes the biblical references. See Daniel J. Harrington, “Pseudo-Philo,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1983).

195 Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 2002), 12, 237–38. Josephus lived and wrote in Rome, moving there after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE, and probably never returned to the land of Israel (p. 11). So one has to ask if his concept of freedom was influenced by living not only in the Diaspora but in the Roman capital itself. We know this, at least, that Josephus never left his Judaism behind him. Rajak notes that “Josephus was always a Jew, and, throughout his writing life, was preoccupied with Judaism” (p. 11). See also Michael Tuval, *From Jerusalem Priest to Roman Jew: On Josephus and the Paradigms of Ancient Judaism*, WUNT 357 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 2–3. After exploring how Josephus conceives of freedom, both in this section and in the following one, I will consider in the summary of Jewish concepts of freedom if and how he differs from his fellow Jews in his understanding of freedom.

196 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, LCL 242 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), xii–xiii.

197 Lexical searches were done using *TLG*. Thackeray asserted that Josephus used Greek assistants when composing his texts, although he did determine *Ant.* 1–14 to be written primarily by Josephus. *Ibid.*, xiv–xvii. Scholars since, however, have argued against this assistant theory. See R. J. H. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus* (London: SPCK, 1961), 59–75; Rajak, *Josephus*, 232–36. Therefore, we can conclude that Josephus's use of the freedom terminology is his own.

198 3.196; 4.146–47, 238, 244; 11.39, 210–11.

and he mentions the individual freedom slaves receive when they are manumitted (4.259), especially on the seventh or fiftieth year (3.282–83, 4.273). He uses the freedom terminology most often in his narrative of the Exodus and the resulting Israelite state, with its continual battle for autonomy in the Promised Land. When he writes about the Exodus, Josephus speaks of the Israelites's "love of liberty" even before they leave Egypt (2.281), of Moses's purpose of "procuring his people's liberty" (2.290), of the Israelites "believing themselves assuredly at liberty" when Pharaoh's armies are destroyed in the Red Sea (2.345), of the whole congregation at Mt. Sinai singing "hymns to God, as the author and dispenser of their salvation and their liberty" (3.64), and of Moses reminding them on the border of the Promised Land of the two blessings "which God has resolved to grant you, liberty and the possession of a favoured land" (3.300).¹⁹⁹ After the Israelites enter and settle the Promised Land, Josephus speaks of their battles to either maintain or reestablish their national sovereignty in terms of fighting for and maintaining their freedom.²⁰⁰ We see then Josephus writing of both individual and state freedom in reference to Israel. In several passages, he juxtaposes the freedom of the Exodus and the freedom in the Promised Land with slavery (2.329, 2.345 3.19–20, 3.248, 6.19–21).

3.2.4 Summary of the Rewritten Bible Literature

The authors of these Rewritten Bible texts portray more than one concept of freedom. While there is one reference to death as a type of freedom, these authors write primarily of individual freedom. They conceive of the world as divided into free and slave and mention the freedom slaves received when they are manumitted. There is some indication that in the second or first centuries BCE, some Jews conceived of the return from exile in terms of individual freedom. Pseudo-Philo writes of the Exodus of the Israelites in terms of freedom, but the Latin translator of this text probably did his work after the first century CE, so it is difficult to determine if he is reflecting a first-century understanding or a later one. Josephus, however, lived and wrote in the first century, and he clearly portrays the Exodus and the resultant Israelite state in terms of freedom—a portrayal of both individual freedom and state freedom.

199 All English translations in books 1–3 are by Thackeray. "Liberty" in these passages is the Greek ἐλευθερος and its derivatives. Other passages where Josephus uses the freedom terminology when speaking of the Exodus are 2.326–27, 329; 3.19–20, 44–45, 248, 300; 4.42–43; and 5.34.

200 5.180–83, 187, 194, 213–14, 265–66, 275; 6.19–21, 60–61, 90, 98; 7.95, 258–59; 8.38.

3.3 *The Jewish Historical Literature*

The most significant Jewish historical texts are 1 and 2 Maccabees (both likely written around 125 BCE)²⁰¹ and the two histories of Josephus, *Jewish War* (75–79 CE) and *Jewish Antiquities* (93–94 CE).²⁰² First and Second Maccabees are separate accounts of the Jewish uprising against Antiochus IV Epiphanes (167–164 BCE) and the resultant sovereign Jewish state. First Maccabees covers a longer period of time (175–ca. 134 BCE) than 2 Maccabees (187–162 BCE), but the books together are almost the sole source of information we have about the Maccabean revolt and the beginning of the Hasmonean rule.²⁰³ In his *Jewish War*, Josephus covers the time period from Antiochus Epiphanes through the end of the first Jewish Revolt (ca. 170 BCE–73 CE), but most of this work focuses on the Jewish Revolt (66–73 CE, books 2–7). In *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus starts with the biblical story of creation and takes the Jewish history through the beginning of the Jewish Revolt in 66 CE. We examined books 1–11 in the “Rewritten Bible” section, so we will consider books 11–20 in this section.²⁰⁴ In the same way that 1 and 2 Maccabees are significant, Josephus in his histories “constitute our only continuous source for the history of Palestine in the time of the Herods and the Roman procurators.”²⁰⁵

3.3.1 1 and 2 Maccabees

Although the authors of 1 and 2 Maccabees write of the Jews’ successful fight to free Israel from foreign rule, they rarely use ἐλεύθερος and its derivatives in their accounts.²⁰⁶ The author of 1 Maccabees writes of the individual freedom promised to the Jews taken captive by King Demetrius (10:33). The other three references to freedom are to the state freedom of Israel, either that which was lost (2:11) or regained (14:26, 15:7). In the first reference, the author juxtaposes freedom with slavery: Jerusalem is “no longer free, she has become a slave” (NRSV). The author of 2 Maccabees refers to individual freedom in the prayer of Jonathan in which he requests God to “set free those [Jews] who are slaves among the Gentiles” (1:27, NRSV). The other reference this author makes is to the restored freedom of Jerusalem (2:19–23), a form of state freedom.

201 Lester L. Grabbe, “1 and 2 Maccabees,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 657, 660.

202 Composition dates are from Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, xii, and Rajak, *Josephus*, 237–38 respectively. Josephus also wrote two other works, *The Life* and *Against Apion*.

203 Grabbe, “1 and 2 Maccabees,” 657.

204 Josephus concludes his rewrite of the biblical account and moves to Alexander the Great in 11.304.

205 Rajak, *Josephus*, 1.

206 Lexical searches were done using the computer software BibleWorks 9.0.

3.3.2 Josephus: "Jewish War" and "Jewish Antiquities"

As mentioned, the focus of the *Jewish War* is the first Jewish Revolt (66–70 CE). In the first book, Josephus summarizes the Jewish history from Antiochus Epiphanes (ca. 170 BCE) through 66 CE. It is in this book that Josephus makes his only reference to civic freedom (1.169–70), and one of only three references to individual freedom (1.353). In the rest of the *Jewish War*, he rarely speaks of individual freedom (2.245–49, 5.406), and he mentions the freedom a slave receives upon being manumitted only once (4.508). He does indicate indirectly, however, the value some Jews placed on individual freedom when he records how some Jews chose to kill themselves, and sometimes their families with them, rather than enter into slavery as a result of defeat by the Romans (4.79–81, Gamala; 7.334–36, Masada). Josephus continues to divide humankind into slave and free.²⁰⁷ When telling the story of Masada, Josephus writes that death is a type of freedom: "for it is death which gives liberty to the soul and permits it to depart to its own pure abode, there to be free from all calamity" (7.344). The most consistent and regular portrayal of freedom in the *Jewish War* is that of state freedom and it is sometimes juxtaposed with slavery, as in this speech by Ananus: "Have you then lost that most honourable, that most instinctive, of passions—the desire for liberty? Have we fallen in love with slavery, in love with our masters, as though submission were a heritage from our forefathers?" (4.175).²⁰⁸

In books 11–20 of his *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus begins with Alexander the Great (336 BCE) and continues through to the eve of the Jewish Revolt in 66 CE. Individual freedom is still a rare topic (13.53), but Josephus mentions the freedom a slave receives when manumitted more often.²⁰⁹ He also has more references to civic freedom, primarily in book nineteen where he tells the story of Gaius's assassination. These references then are to Roman civic freedom. He continues to divide humankind into slave and free,²¹⁰ but only rarely uses the freedom terminology to indicate character.²¹¹ The state freedom of Israel is still a very common topic, especially since the Maccabean revolt took place during this time period. For example, Josephus reports this speech by Judas (cf. 1 Macc 3:59): "[hold] firm to the belief that if you die for such precious

207 1.255, 584–85; 4.508; 5.321–22; 7.265, 386.

208 See also 3.362–69; 5.389; 7.255–56. While Josephus never mentions the state freedom of Israel in book 1, he mentions it almost 40 times in books 2–7.

209 12.144; 13.52; 14.321; 18.37–38, 186–87, 193–94; 19.131, 242.

210 12.315; 14.313, 342; 16.40–41, 126; 17.118; 19.82–83, 86, 166–67, 182–84, 231–33; 20.264.

211 4.245, 251–52; 12.166.

causes as liberty, country, laws and religion, you will gain eternal glory” (12.304).²¹² Josephus also continues to juxtapose state freedom with slavery.²¹³

3.3.3 Summary of the Jewish Historical Literature

The Jewish historians refer primarily to state freedom. They speak of the freedom the Jews sought first from the Seleucids, then the Romans, and they juxtapose this freedom with slavery. The historians, however, also write at times of individual freedom, including the freedom a slave experienced when manumitted. Josephus mentions civic freedom when speaking of the Romans and briefly touches on death as a type of freedom. He also continues to give evidence of the ancient view of dividing humankind into slave and free, and in a few instances, he uses the freedom terminology to indicate character.

3.4 *The Jewish Philosophical Literature*

Ben Sira, a Jewish sage who lived in Jerusalem, wrote his *Sirach* or *Ecclesiasticus* originally in Hebrew (ca. 196–175 BCE). His grandson later translated it into Greek when he arrived in Egypt sometime after 132 BCE. This text stands in a long tradition of Jewish wisdom literature, but it is the only wisdom literature considered in this section. The other wisdom texts fall into the category of Hebrew Scripture or do not use any freedom terminology. Philo (ca. 20 BCE–ca. 50 CE) was a Jewish philosopher who lived in Alexandria. He was a prolific writer who published biblical commentaries and apologetic and philosophical works.

3.4.1 Ben Sira

The Greek text of *Sirach* uses the freedom terminology only three times.²¹⁴ In one reference, there is the typical division of free and slave (10:25). The other two references are to the individual freedom slaves experience when they are manumitted. The first reference advises a master not to abuse a faithful slave and to “not withhold from him his freedom” (7:20–21, RSV), and the second reference warns a master to keep his slave busy because an idle slave “will seek liberty” (33:26, NRSV). We have fragments of the Hebrew text of *Sirach*, and while 33:26 is not extant in any of the manuscripts, the other two references

212 Where 1 Maccabees lacks the freedom terminology, Josephus includes it. Josephus speaks of state freedom, however, much less often in the *Antiquities* (about fifteen times) than in the *Jewish War* (almost forty times).

213 12.433–34; 13.1, 213–14; 18.4–5; 20.119–20.

214 Lexical searches were done using the computer software BibleWorks 9.0.

are.²¹⁵ The Hebrew text of 10:25 does not refer to the free in juxtaposition to the slave. It is interesting that in the works we have examined, the Hebrew writers do not use this dichotomy, whereas the Greek writers almost always do.²¹⁶ The Hebrew text of 7:21 does use the freedom terminology, שפח, and so it reads the same as the Greek. So, we see in the Greek text of Sirach, references to humankind divided into slave and free and to the individual freedom a slave experiences when manumitted. In the Hebrew text, we see only a reference to the latter.

3.4.2 Philo

Philo was a Diaspora Jew who was intimately familiar with the Septuagint and well acquainted with Greek philosophy. He explained the Jewish Scriptures using allegory and viewed much of life through the lens of both Platonism and Stoicism. Philo regularly divides people into slave and free,²¹⁷ sometimes indicating that free persons have distinguishing physical characteristics.²¹⁸ He often uses the freedom terminology (ἐλεύθερος, ἀνελεύθερος) to speak about positive and negative moral characteristics.²¹⁹ Philo speaks of individual freedom, asserting that people are “free by nature, no man being naturally a slave” (*Leg.* 2.69 [Colson]).²²⁰ Yet he considers slaves an “indispensable possession” because “life contains a vast number of circumstances which demand the ministrations of slaves” (*Spec.* 2.123 [Colson]). Philo writes of the freedom slaves receive when they are manumitted, commenting that “a slave can have no greater boon than freedom” (*Leg.* 2.84 [Colson]).²²¹ He also asserts that not only slaves but all people consider freedom the “most precious of all possessions” (*Leg.* 4.16 [Colson]). Like others during this time period, he speaks of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt in terms of freedom.²²²

215 Hebrew manuscripts and translations found at “The Book of Ben Sira,” <http://www.bensira.org/index.html>.

216 When speaking of the Hebrew culture, Martin Ostwald observes that “the difference between slave and free remained more blurred than in other cultures.” Ostwald, “Freedom and the Greeks,” 43.

217 Philo uses the freedom terminology over 250 times, and almost fifty of those occurrences refer to people as slave or free. Lexical searches were done using *TLG*.

218 *Sacr.* 26; *Ios.* 105–106; *Contempl.* 69.

219 *Agr.* 34, 73; *Det.* 18; *Deus* 164; *Ebr.* 214–15; *Flacc.* 130; *Fug.* 28; *Ios.* 77; *Leg.* 3.195; *Prob.* 154–55; *Sacr.* 32; *Somn.* 1.107; *Spec.* 1.221, 2.92, 4.183–84; *Virt.* 86–87, 92.

220 See also *Contempl.* 69; *Det.* 63; *Flacc.* 182–83; *Opif.* 167; *Prob.* 79, 115–18, 124–25; *Somn.* 2.293–94; *Spec.* 4.2–3.

221 See also *Ios.* 46–47; *Spec.* 2.67, 2.84, 2.122, 3.184, 3.196–98, 3.201; *Virt.* 115.

222 *Leg.* 2.218; *Mos.* 1.71, 1.85–87, 1.170–72, 1.193, 1.246–47.

The primary conception Philo has of freedom throughout his works, however, is inner freedom, and he echoes many Stoic ideals. He asserts that “only the wise man is free” (*Post.* 138 [Colson/Whitaker]), that reason and knowledge lead to freedom (*Leg.* 3.202), that only the mind is free (*Deus* 47), and that the virtuous are free (*Prob.* 98). In contrast, the passions enslave (*Her.* 271; *Exsecr.* 123–24; *Prob.* 17) and the fear of death enslaves (*Prob.* 22).

Philo, like the Stoics, asserts that the virtuous person is free—regardless of his or her external circumstances. In his treatise, *Every Good Person is Free*, he writes on this idea of inner freedom at length. He begins by stating that slavery can be ascribed to the noble and freedom to the slave (10). He asserts that “one who cannot be compelled to do anything or prevented from doing anything, cannot be a slave. But the good man cannot be compelled or prevented: the good man, therefore, cannot be a slave” (60 [Colson]). Philo goes on to present the idea that freedom is worth dying for (112–13) and gives several examples of people who refuse to remain in or enter into physical slavery: a child taken into captivity refuses to do ignoble work and takes his own life (75; cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 77); mothers taken captive in war consider “slavery to be the worst disgrace” and throw their infant children into a river so that they might not become slaves (115 [Colson]); and “whole populations voluntarily [suffer] annihilation to safeguard their liberty” (118 [Colson]). If inner freedom is such a lofty ideal, then why is Philo extolling the choice of death over life in these situations? If inner freedom was desired and sufficient, why would these people determine to take their own lives? It appears that Philo believes that it was bad fortune which had made (or was going to make) these persons physical slaves (18, 37), and, since they were naturally free, it is permitted that they resist the physical slavery to which they find themselves subjected. But Philo also looks to the story of Esau being designated Jacob’s slave, and he concludes that physical slavery benefits those who are fools, enslaved to their passions (57). So, he argues on the one hand that no one is a natural slave, and on the other that those enslaved to their passions ought to be physical slaves for their own benefit.²²³

What differentiates Philo from the Stoics is his monotheism and belief in a transcendent God, and this belief informs his understanding of freedom.²²⁴ He argues that “the worshipper of God has reaped eternal freedom” (*Sacr.* 127

223 Peter Garnsey, “Philo Judaeus and Slave Theory,” *SCI* 13 (1994): 42–43. In holding these two disparate views, “Philonic slave theory is split down the middle between Stoic and Aristotelian perspectives.” Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine*, 157.

224 Roberto Radice, “Philo and Stoic Ethics: Reflections on the Idea of Freedom,” in *Philo of Alexandria and Post-Aristotelian Philosophy*, ed. Francesca Alesse (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 143.

[Colson/Whitaker]) and that God frees “the souls which are his suppliants” (*Her.* 273 [Colson]). However, he also says on more than one occasion that “to be the slave of God is the highest boast of man, a treasure more precious not only than freedom, but than wealth and power and all that mortals most cherish” (*Cher.* 107 [Colson/Whitaker]).²²⁵ So freedom comes through relationship to God, and that relationship is one of both freedom and slavery.²²⁶

3.4.3 Summary of the Jewish Philosophical Literature

The philosophies of Ben Sira and Philo do not focus on the same concept of freedom. Ben Sira, writing in the wisdom tradition, speaks only of the individual freedom slaves receive when they are manumitted. His grandson, translating the work into Greek, divides humankind into slave and free. Philo, influenced by Greek philosophy, focuses on inner freedom. He too divides humankind into slave and free and speaks of individual freedom and how both slave and free value it. He writes of the Exodus of the Israelites in terms of freedom, but he also asserts that being the slave of God is better than freedom. While Philo argues that freedom is possible regardless of a person's external circumstances, he also extols those who choose death rather than remain in or enter into actual slavery. He holds to the idea that no person is naturally a slave, but he also holds that those who are enslaved to their passions ought to be physical slaves for their own benefit.

3.5 *Summary of Jewish Concepts of Freedom*

We began our search for the Jewish concepts of freedom with the Hebrew Scriptures and the Septuagint, listening for ideas of freedom where some claimed we would only hear silence. We then turned our attention to the unique Jewish genre of Rewritten Bible before examining the more common genres of history and philosophy. We found that the Jewish people, like the Greeks and Romans, had multiple concepts of freedom.

The Hebrew Scriptures refer primarily to the individual freedom that slaves experience when they are manumitted. A few texts seem to speak of death as a type of freedom. The Scriptures do not use the freedom terminology when speaking of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt; however, the concept is still present apart from the terminology. The Septuagint reflects the same concepts of freedom, but also uses the freedom terminology to indicate a moral

²²⁵ See also *Conf.* 93–94; *Leg.* 1.57; *Somn.* 2.100.

²²⁶ As MacLean notes, it is a “largely Judaic concept that submission to God leads to freedom.” Rose MacLean, *Freed Slaves and Roman Imperial Culture: Social Integration and the Transformation of Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 66.

connotation of freedom. The Rewritten Bible texts speak of both individual and state freedom and mention death as a type of freedom. There is some indication that before the turn of the era some Jews conceived of the return from exile in terms of freedom. Writing at the end of the first century CE, Josephus clearly portrays the Exodus from Egypt in terms of freedom. The Jewish historians, like the Greek and Roman historians, focus on state freedom. The Jewish philosophers held different conceptions. Ben Sira, who lived in Jerusalem, speaks only of the individual freedom slaves receive when manumitted. Philo, who lived in Alexandria, focuses on inner freedom. However, he also speaks of the Exodus of the Israelites using the freedom terminology.

Like the Greek and Roman authors, the Jewish authors speak of individual, state, civic, and inner freedom and at times even mention the moral connotation of freedom and slavery. There are, however, some interesting distinctions: (1) the Jewish authors who write in Hebrew do not divide humankind into slave and free; (2) only the Septuagint (briefly), Josephus (rarely), and Philo give evidence of the moral connotation of slavery and freedom; (3) beginning with the Maccabean revolt, there is an implicit connection between state freedom and religious freedom, and (4) only Philo speaks of inner freedom.

To explore these distinctions, we begin by observing that the Hebrew Scriptures do not divide humankind into slave and free or associate immorality or shame with slavery. It is only in the Septuagint and the Second Temple Jewish literature that we begin to see the division of slave and free, and the Septuagint hints of the moral connotation that accompanied this division. By the turn of the era and into the first century CE, Philo and Josephus both regularly reflect this dichotomy. And while both speak of the moral characterization of slave and free, Philo does so much more frequently than Josephus. So, while the division of humankind into slave and free enters the Jewish world view, the moral characterization of slave and free remains more on the periphery.

Beginning with the Maccabean revolt, the Jews fought to maintain their freedom to worship God and him alone and to establish their autonomy as a nation.²²⁷ They achieved and maintained their state and religious freedom until they came under Roman hegemony when Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 BCE. Throughout the turn of the era and the first century CE, any perceived assault on the Jewish temple or cult by the Romans was met by uprisings and threats by the Jews. There were some Jews, called the fourth philosophy by

227 Shaye Cohen points out that “what provoked the persecution by Epiphanes remains an enigma in spite of intense study by many scholars, but a persecution there was, and the war it provoked is history’s first recorded struggle for religious liberty.” Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 30.

Josephus, who had “a passion for liberty that is almost unconquerable, since they are convinced that God alone is their leader and master” (*Ant.* 18.23 [Feldman]). So, for a Jew living in Israel in the first century CE, one dominant concept of freedom was the state freedom of Israel and the accompanying religious freedom to follow the Law, worship at the temple, and keep the temple undefiled. Ultimately, this desire for freedom led to the Jewish Revolt in 66 CE and resulted in the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem by Rome in 70 CE. The first century was a time of revolutionary fervor and heightened awareness of state and religious freedom, or the lack thereof, for those living in Israel.²²⁸

Philo, however, did not focus on state freedom, or even individual freedom, but extolled inner freedom. He lived in Alexandria, far removed geographically from the growing fervor in Israel. Like his fellow Diaspora Jews, his life was one of negotiating as a religious and ethnic minority in a foreign country. He was evidently wealthy, well-placed socially, and led a comfortable life.²²⁹ And he alone of the Jewish writers spoke of inner freedom. Even Josephus, who lived the second half of his life in Rome, where many embraced Stoicism and the ideal of inner freedom, did not speak of this kind of freedom.²³⁰

So, how did a Jew in the first century CE understand freedom? While their Scriptures did not divide the world into slave and free, there is evidence that they probably did share this dichotomy found in the Greek and Roman world views. They conceived of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt in terms of freedom: they understood the Israelites' individual and state freedom as provided by God, with the purpose being that the Israelites would serve and worship only him. While Philo embraced inner freedom, we do not know how many of his fellow Jews valued and pursued inner freedom. There is evidence, however, that some chose to commit suicide rather than to go into slavery.²³¹

228 Martin Hengel notes that “the history of Palestinian Judaism from the time of Pompey’s conquest of Jerusalem until the Revolt of Bar Koseba about two hundred years later is deeply marked by the Jews’ struggle for religious and political freedom.” Hengel, *The Zealots*, 1.

229 Philo, *On the Creation; Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis 2 and 3*, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), ix.

230 We can observe then that even though Josephus lived in Rome, his concepts of freedom are reflective of his fellow Jews’ concepts. The exception would be that he did not associate religious freedom with state freedom—but not all of his fellow Jews did either.

231 Hengel writes that “suicide had a special place in the Jewish and Zealot conception of martyrdom because imprisonment made it to a high degree impossible for Jews to follow the law. There was also the question of consideration for the family. Women were exposed to the danger of being violated and children to that of becoming pagans and serving idols. Many Jews also found the idea of their own bodies being violated unbearable. It was therefore possible for suicide to appear as an act that was necessary for the

And we know that in the first century there were Jews who argued, fought, and died for state freedom, many with the idea that this would provide them religious freedom—the freedom that would allow them to finally serve only God and keep themselves and their temple undefiled.

4 Greek, Roman, and Jewish Concepts of Freedom Compared

The ancient Greeks, Romans, and Jews shared many concepts of freedom. They all conceived of state freedom, civic freedom, individual freedom, and inner freedom. They all spoke, although rarely, of death as a type of freedom. These different concepts cross eras and genres, although we do find that the historians (Greek, Roman, and Jewish) tend to focus on state or civic freedom. This focus of the historians appears to have unduly influenced the modern portrayal of ancient freedom. But as several scholars have noted and this survey has shown, there is no monolithic conception of Greek, Roman, or Jewish freedom.

The ancient Greeks divided their world into slave and free, and thus slavery and freedom become inextricably related, each in a fundamental sense defining the other. The Romans shared this same dichotomy of slave and free but took steps to further differentiate those who were free and those who were born free, never having known the stain of slavery. The ancient Jews did not divide people into slave and free, but by the time of the first century CE they had adopted the world view of the Greeks and Romans in this area. They too came to conceive of humankind as slave and free.

As the Greeks developed this view of people, they began to associate moral characteristics with the slave and free. They associated shame with slavery and virtue with freedom—to lose freedom was to lose honor and worth. This identification of a moral component to freedom and slavery was complete and rarely challenged. The Romans shared and even increased the moral divide between free and slave. Because freedpersons could become citizens in Rome, the Romans were particularly concerned about the moral character of a slave before he or she was given freedom and perhaps citizenship. While the Jews in the first century CE did share the dichotomy of slave and free, there is less evidence that they associated shame and immorality with slavery. Some Jewish authors did write of this moral connotation, but they were few. The Hebrew

sake of faithfulness to the law.” Hengel, *The Zealots*, 270. It would seem then that inner freedom with its disregard of external circumstances, at least to Jews in the land of Israel, was a distant and foreign ideal.

Scriptures, which did not associate shame with slavery, appear to have had a lasting influence on the Jews in this respect.

The Greeks and Romans explored the concept of inner freedom. Among the Jewish authors, only Philo spoke of this freedom. The philosophy of Stoicism advanced the pursuit of inner freedom, the main premise of which was that external circumstances could not provide or take away true freedom. Two groups, however, did not appear to embrace the concept of inner freedom: the slaves and the Jews. Our sources, even though they were written by the elite, still provide us with evidence that slaves—those with the least amount of external freedom—placed a high value on freedom. They hoped for freedom, pointedly ask for it, worked for it, risked their lives in war for it, and often paid a large amount of money for it. Their goal was individual freedom—not inner freedom. While Philo often expounded on the virtues of inner freedom, his fellow Jewish writers were silent about such freedom. The actions of some Jews spoke into this silence, indicating that at least for them there was no room in their world view for inner freedom. Slavery, the ultimate denial of individual freedom, was an intolerable option, and Josephus gives evidence that some Jews chose death by their own hands rather than a life lived in slavery. While slavery was a miserable existence for most, for Jews, it also prevented them, in most cases, from being able to follow the Law.²³²

While the Jews shared many of the same concepts of freedom with the Greeks and Romans, it is only the Jews who conceived of, and sought, religious freedom. For the Jews, religious freedom and state freedom were often implicitly bound together. Freedom for Jews included the ability to follow the Law, worship at the temple, and keep themselves and the temple undefiled. When Antiochus IV Epiphanes challenged these freedoms, the Jews revolted in order to reclaim their religious freedom. Some of their leaders then decided the only way to maintain this freedom was to also establish Israel's state freedom. When Israel later lost her state freedom to Rome, and the people began to feel their religious freedom challenged, the Jews once again sought to establish Israel's state freedom in order to maintain their religious freedom. Other nations also closely associated state functions and religious functions, but their religions were pluralistic and accommodation with Roman rule and religion was possible.²³³ Judaism, with its worship of one God, found accommodation difficult, if not impossible.

In summary, the Greeks, Romans, and Jews all conceived of freedom in various ways: state freedom, civic freedom, individual freedom, and inner freedom.

²³² See also Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 19, 34, 54.

²³³ See also P. A. Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 272.

Only the Jews conceived of religious freedom. If we could ask an ancient Greek, Roman, or Jew how they understood freedom, the answers would no doubt vary. But we can venture now to propose the most common answer we would receive. For all three, freedom was fundamentally being free and not a slave.

5 Paul's Concept of Freedom

What was Paul's concept of freedom? We will explore this question in more depth in the next chapter, but we can make a few observations in light of these three world views. Paul, like his fellow Jews, had been enculturated to see the world through the lens of slave and free. As noted at the start of chapter 2, Paul uses this dichotomy in his writings.²³⁴ But unlike some of his fellow Jews, he did not see state freedom as fundamental for religious freedom. Rather, he instructed believers to be subject to the government where they lived (Rom 13:1–7). As Philo spoke of being a slave to God, Paul writes of being a slave to Christ and God.²³⁵ And like Philo, Paul uses the slavery/freedom language to write of inner freedom (Rom 6:16–23; Gal 4:8–10). Unlike Philo, however, Paul does not extol death over physical slavery (1 Cor 7:21). The question that remains is how did Paul's understanding of inner freedom impact his understanding of individual freedom? To that question we now turn.

234 1 Cor 12:13, Gal 3:28. In his disputed letters: Eph 6:8, Col 3:11.

235 Christ: Rom 1:1, Gal 1:10, Phil 1:1. In his disputed letters, Christ: Col 4:12; God: Tit 1:1.

Freedom in Galatians: A Freed Slave's Perspective

As noted at the beginning of chapter 3, many scholars consider freedom to be the primary theme in Paul's letter to the Galatian churches. Samuel Vollenweider goes so far as to call the letter the "Magna Charta of Christian freedom."¹ Paul uses ἐλευθερία and its derivatives more frequently in Galatians than in any of his other letters.² But he also uses other related terms such as ἐξαίρῶ ("to set free, deliver, rescue") in Gal 1:4, ἐξαγοράζω ("to deliver, liberate") in Gal 3:13 and 4:14, and he speaks of people no longer being slaves in Gal 4:7.³ The idea of freedom runs throughout this letter. As William Ramsay notes, "The prominence of the idea is something special to this Epistle."⁴

What prompted Paul to write this particular letter with such an emphasis on freedom? A report somehow found its way to Paul that there was trouble in the churches of Galatia.⁵ In response to this alarming news, Paul sent a letter to be read in each Galatian church. In the letter itself, Paul indicates that the Galatians are deserting the gospel that he delivered to them for a "different gospel" (1:6). He speaks of people who are "troubling" the Galatians and wanting to "distort the gospel of Christ" (1:7). Paul never identifies these people, but simply calls them again, "those who are disturbing you" (5:12). Only at the end of his letter does Paul indicate that these troublemakers are attempting

1 Samuel Vollenweider, *Freiheit als neue Schöpfung: Eine Untersuchung zur Eleutheria bei Paulus und in seiner Umwelt*, FRLANT 147 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 285.

2 In Galatians, the ἐλευθερ- word group is used 11x; in 1 Cor 7x, Rom 7x, 2 Cor 2x. In his disputed letters: Eph 1x, Col 1x. Lexical search was done using the computer software BibleWorks 9.0.

3 Glosses are from BDAG, 343.

4 William M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1900; reprint, Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock, 1978), 442.

5 Debate continues as to where exactly these churches were located. On the North Galatian theory, the area referenced is the territory inhabited by the Celtic (Galatian) tribes, and so these churches would have been established during Paul's second missionary journey. On the South Galatian theory, the area referenced is the Roman province of Galatia, and thus these churches would have been established during Paul's first missionary journey. For a detailed explanation of both theories and proponents of each see Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), lxi–lxxii. While I hold to the South Galatian theory (primarily due to the expansion and large size of the Roman province of Galatia and to inscriptions calling the entire region "Galatia"), the specific location of these churches within Asia Minor does not directly inform this study.

to compel the Galatians, quite specifically the men, to be circumcised (6:12).⁶ There is some indication that the church at large, both men and women, is being encouraged to follow the Mosaic law (4:10, 21). And there appears to be disunity in the churches, as Paul mentions they “bite and devour one another” (5:15), but whether this disunity is due to the troublemakers or another reason is not clear.⁷

From the very first lines of his letter, Paul speaks of freedom. He begins with the freedom that Christ came to provide from the present evil age (1:4), and he affirms that believers have this freedom in Christ Jesus himself (2:4). Paul explains throughout that Christ came so that people would no longer be slaves (4:7): Christ came to free them from the curse of the law (3:13), from being imprisoned under sin (3:22), from the law itself (3:23–25, 4:5, 5:18), from the elemental things of the world (4:3), from beings that are not gods (4:8), from the flesh and its desires (5:24), and from the world (6:14). Paul tells the Galatians that Christ came to set them free from a covenant of slavery and to establish them in a covenant of freedom (4:22–31), for he came to free them for freedom itself (5:1). Paul affirms that the Galatians are no longer slaves but are now sons and daughters and heirs, full members of the family of God (3:7, 26, 29; 4:7). He emphasizes that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything (5:6, 6:15)—they are sons and daughters because of their faith in Christ (3:7, 26; 5:6). And, significantly, he associates the Spirit with this faith and freedom Christ came to provide (3:2–3, 3:14, 4:6, 5:16–18, 5:25). Paul is desperately trying

6 Judith Lieu notes, “The question remains unanswered, what the focus on circumcision as the defining issue in the self-identity of authentic Christianity over against Judaism meant for women.” Judith M. Lieu, “Circumcision, Women and Salvation,” *NTS* 40, no. 3 (1994): 369. See also Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, 10th Anniversary ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 210–11; Tatha Wiley, *Paul and the Gentile Women: Reframing Galatians* (New York: Continuum, 2005). This subject is outside the scope of this project, but since slaves and freedpersons were both women and men, the answer to the question has implications that are worth pursuing.

7 There is consensus on the basic premise that Paul writes to the Galatian churches because they are being persuaded to accept a “different gospel,” and that those persuading them, the opponents, are urging the (male) Galatians to be circumcised. See Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1979), 6, 28; A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary: A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 4; Martinus C. De Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 10; Longenecker, *Galatians*, xcix; Peter Oakes, *Galatians*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 7–8. There is no consensus, however, concerning the opponents' relationship to the Jerusalem church, their view of Paul, their teaching, or their motives.

to communicate to the Galatians that to place themselves under the law and circumcision is to accept the very slavery from which Christ came to free them.

As each Galatian church gathered to hear this letter from Paul, those who came to find a place to sit or stand probably included Jews (although likely few) and Gentiles, women and men, slaves and freeborn people—and freedpersons.⁸ As these different people listened to Paul's letter being read, they heard the language of slavery and freedom throughout. How did those who were slaves, who longed for freedom, and those who were freedpersons, who had achieved a circumscribed freedom, hear and understand these references? Did it matter that some references were to physical slavery and freedom, and some were metaphorical?⁹ Peter Oakes asserts that "proper interpretation includes consideration of how we can fairly expect the text to have been heard by *all* the types of people for whom it was probably written."¹⁰

There are several reasons we ought to consider how the freedpersons in the Galatian churches might have heard Paul's message of freedom. First, Paul would have been aware of the different groups and statuses that comprised the Galatian churches when he wrote his letter. For his argument to be effective, he would need to be knowledgeable of their views of freedom, whether to affirm or correct them. Second, it is necessary to identify the freedpersons' views of freedom so that we do not simply assume they held our twenty-first century views. And finally, it is important to consider the freedpersons who were members of the Galatian churches because Paul desired for every individual to embrace his

8 Oakes notes that "the implied reader of Galatians is a free, male gentile inclined to adopt circumcision. This was probably only a limited minority of the people for whom Paul was writing. Probably at least about half were women. Some were probably slaves. Some may have been Christian Jews." Oakes, *Galatians*, 14. For the inclusion of freedpersons in the Pauline churches, see Dale B. Martin, "Slave Families and Slaves in Families," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 207; Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 72–73.

9 Looking at 1 Corinthians 7, Kartzow asks, "How did it influence real slaves when theological ideas were mixed up with slavery in metaphorical language?" Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *The Slave Metaphor and Gendered Enslavement in Early Christian Discourse: Double Trouble Embodied*, RSECW (London: Routledge, 2018), 3. De Wet asserts that both metaphor and reality must be considered together because "the metaphor of slavery had a direct impact on the economy of slavery, and with all the accompanying carceral mechanisms served to sustain the institution of slavery." Chris L. de Wet, *Preaching Bondage: John Chrysostom and the Discourse of Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 25.

10 Oakes, *Galatians*, 14, emphasis mine.

message. It is quite possible that their social location may have impacted how these freedpersons heard and understood Paul's message of freedom.¹¹

With the specific goal of attempting to understand how a freedperson would have heard and understood the freedom references in Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia, I will trace the various terms and ideas associated with manumission and freedom found in the lived experience of freedpersons. I will do this by considering the same topics explored for Greek and Roman manumission: reasons for providing freedom, means and cost of providing freedom, extent of freedom provided, and benefits of freedom. I will then consider how a freedperson would have likely heard the proclamation of Gal 5:1, "For freedom Christ set us free."

1 The Reasons Christ Set Believers Free

Throughout this letter, Paul reminds his listeners of the work Christ had done on their behalf, but he also reminds them of *why* he did it. In the very first sentence, the Galatians hear that Christ gave himself for the purpose of setting them free or rescuing them (ἐξαιρέω) from this present evil age (1:4). The verb ἐξαιρέω obviously has the connotation of freedom, but how would a freedperson in Asia Minor have understood this term? Many commentators have noted the use of this word in the Septuagint, especially in passages referencing the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt (Exod 3:8, 18:8–10; Judg 6:9).¹² This account is one of God bringing actual slaves out of slavery. Those listening may have been familiar with the Septuagint if there were Jewish Christians among them

11 Kelly Brown Douglas takes this argument in regards to social location even further: "If indeed, as suggested by nothing less than the fact of God's entrance into the world through a manger, there is a certain moral agency and hence preferential option intrinsic to marginal realities, then we are called as theologians, as biblical scholars and as Church people to listen to and learn from those on the underside of Church and society As we enter the biblical world and encounter various biblical stories, we must do so from the view of those who represent the most marginalized—the least of these in the stories." Kelly Brown Douglas, "Marginalized People, Liberating Perspectives: A Womanist Approach to Biblical Interpretation," *AThR* 83, no. 1 (2001): 46.

12 For example, James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1993), 35; Don Garlington, *An Exposition of Galatians: A Reading from the New Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 56; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 90; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 77; T. A. Wilson, "Wilderness Apostasy and Paul's Portrayal of the Crisis in Galatians," *NTS* 50, no. 4 (2004): 555.

or if they themselves had originally been associated with a Diaspora synagogue in some way.¹³ This term, however, was also used in a Greek context to indicate removing a freedperson from someone who had seized him or her as a slave, thus asserting the freedpersons' freed status.¹⁴ For a first-century person living under Roman hegemony and embedded in a slave society, both contexts—Septuagint and Greek—trigger images of actual slaves being led to freedom and freedpersons having their freedom restored.

Paul states that Christ set the Galatians free from this present evil age, τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ (Gal 1:4). This phrase reflects the Jewish apocalyptic worldview, which divides history into the present age dominated by evil and the age to come in which God eliminates evil and establishes a new creation.¹⁵ For the Galatians living under Roman hegemony, this view would be in sharp contrast with the Roman worldview that “the current age was a golden one of peace and prosperity.”¹⁶ The slaves and freedpersons listening to this letter knew experientially the evil within “this present age,” and the idea of being set free from this age where one person could brutally dominate another surely resonated with them.

When, however, does this freedom or rescue from the present evil age take place? Most commentators answer this question by explaining that Paul has a “realized eschatology” in which the age to come, inaugurated by Christ's death and resurrection, has broken into the present age. Believers “already” experience spiritual freedom from the power of sin and death in the present age, but the age to come has “not yet” fully arrived.¹⁷ Oakes focuses specifically on the

13 John M. G. Barclay, *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 68–69; Craig S. Keener, *Galatians*, NCamBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 7; Oakes, *Galatians*, 14; Ben Witherington, III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 7–8.

14 Lys. 23.9; Dem., *Chers.* 42, [*Theocr.*] 21, [*Neaer.*] 40; Dion. Hal., *Is.* 5.21–24. The usage of this term by Dionysius Halicarnassus is particularly significant because he lived in the late first century BCE and was from Asia Minor. See also Deborah Kamen, *Status in Classical Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 35; Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free: The Concept of Manumission and the Status of Manumitted Slaves in the Ancient Greek World* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 292. Zelnick-Abramovitz comments that “it is significant that manumitted slaves could not act independently to prove their free status against attempts to re-enslave them, but had to rely on a third party” (p. 299).

15 James M. Scott, “A Comparison of Paul's Letter to the Galatians with the Epistle of Enoch,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Benjamin E. Reynolds (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 207–208.

16 Oakes, *Galatians*, 41. See Augustus, *RG* 13; Pliny, *Nat.* 27.2–3; Virgil, *Aen.* 6.851–53.

17 See Betz, *Galatians*, 42; Das, *Galatians*, 84; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 76; Garlington, *Galatians*, 56; Timothy George, *Galatians*, NAC (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman,

slaves in these churches, and he comments that their “continuing enslavement makes it unlikely that they would consider Jesus’s rescue to be complete.”¹⁸ He notes, however, that they likely experienced some change in their relationships within the fellowship of the church itself. But would the slaves and freedpersons have heard these words and desired, even expected, the domination of *Christian* slaveholders and patrons to come to an end? The verb ἐξαίρω in both the Septuagint and Greek context speaks of an actual physical rescue. It is a fair question to ask if those in actual physical bondage or obligation would have understood Christ’s rescue to include not only spiritual rescue but rescue in other areas of life as well—at least within the Christian community.¹⁹

Further along in his letter, Paul declares that another reason Christ gave himself for the Galatians was that he loved them (Gal 2:20). It is significant that Paul personalizes this statement: “I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.”²⁰ Each believer listening to this letter could say that Christ loved them and gave himself for them as individuals—each Jew, each Gentile, each woman, each man, even each slave and freedperson.

As Paul continues his letter, he explains that God sent his son for the purpose of redeeming (ἐξαγοράζω) those under the law (Gal 4:5).²¹ The term ἐξαγοράζω can simply mean “to buy,” but it can also be used to speak of purchasing a slave’s freedom (Diod. Sic. 15.7.1, 36.2.2). Hans D. Betz notes that both uses in Diodorus Siculus have this meaning.²² Diodorus’s use of the term with this

1994), 87; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 73; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 77; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 77; Jarvis J. Williams, *Galatians*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2020), 16; N. T. Wright, *Galatians*, Commentaries for Christian Formation (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 28.

18 Oakes, *Galatians*, 42.

19 Even before his crucifixion and resurrection, as Jesus declared that the kingdom of heaven was near, he and his disciples provided relief from both spiritual *and* physical oppression: casting out demons and healing all manner of diseases and physical problems (i.e., Matt 4:24, Mark 6:12–13).

20 Das, *Galatians*, 273; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, SP 9 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 96; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 173; Albert Vanhoye, *Galatians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 83; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 192; Ronald D. Witherup, *Galatians: Life in the New Creation* (New York: Paulist Press, 2019), 67.

21 Paul used this term earlier in Gal 3:13.

22 Betz, *Galatians*, 149n114. However, he references an article by Lyonnet in which Lyonnet argues that the second reference in Diodorus should be rendered simply “buy.” S. Lyonnet, “L’emploi paulinien de ἐξαγοράζειν au sens de « redimere » est-il attesté dans la littérature grecque?” *Bib* 42, no. 1 (1961): 86–87. In this second reference, Diodorus tells the story of a Roman knight who fell in love with a beautiful slave woman and pays a high price to ἐξαγοράζω her (Walton [LCL] translates this as “purchase her freedom”). Lyonnet argues that the knight was simply purchasing her as his slave, not purchasing her freedom. However, when Diodorus uses this specific term earlier (15.7.1) it definitely refers to purchasing

meaning is significant since he wrote in the mid-first century BCE, and slavery is the context of both his usages. It is likely that Paul uses this term in Galatians with the meaning “to purchase a slave’s freedom” for two reasons. First, the most common term meaning “to buy” in the New Testament is ἀγοράζω.²³ The terms used most often for the idea of redemption are λύτρωσις/λυτρόω²⁴ and ἀπολύτρωσις.²⁵ The term ἐξαγοράζω is only used by Paul: twice here in Galatians and twice in his disputed letters (Eph 5:16, Col 4:5).²⁶ Second, Paul also writes in a context of slavery. After he explains that Christ redeems people so that they might receive adoption as sons and daughters, he follows with the assertion that “you are no longer a slave but a son” (4:7). Looking beyond the close context of this verse to the whole of the letter, Paul fills this particular epistle with references to slaves and slavery and ideas associated with both (Gal 1:10; 2:19; 3:1, 13, 24–25; 4:1, 3, 7–9, 22–26, 30–31; 5:24; 6:12, 14). Paul also uses the “language of constraint” throughout his letter, reflected by his repeated use of ὑπό (3:10, 22–23, 25; 4:2–5, 21; 5:18), showing that people are under a curse, sin, elemental things, and the law.²⁷ By choosing this specific term, ἐξαγοράζω (both here and earlier in 3:13), and situating it in a context of slavery, Paul triggers for his hearers the meaning “to purchase a slave’s freedom.”²⁸

Paul states that God sent his son to purchase the freedom of “those under the law” so that “we might receive adoption as sons and daughters” (4:5). Some commentators argue that this verse addresses only Jews,²⁹ others see the first

someone’s freedom. Since both references are in the context of slavery, it is very possible that Diodorus is using the term in the same manner. In addition, there are references in both Greek and Roman literature to men falling in love with slave women and paying the owners so that they could set these women free (Hyperides, *Athen.* 5–6; Plautus, *Pseud.* 433–35, *Curc.* 208–214, *Epid.* 241–46, *Most.* 15–25).

- 23 This term is found 7x in Matt; 5x in Mark; 5x in Luke; 3x in John; 1x in 2 Pet; 6x in Rev. Paul uses it in 1 Cor 6:20, 7:23, 7:30.
- 24 Luke 1:68, 2:38, 24:21; Heb 9:12; 1 Pet 1:18. In Paul’s disputed letter, Tit 2:14.
- 25 Luke 21:28; Heb 9:15. Paul uses this term 3x in his undisputed letters (Rom 3:24, 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30) and 4x in his disputed letters (Eph 1:7, 1:14, 4:30; Col 1:14).
- 26 In Ephesians and Colossians, the word occurs in a phrase that means “making the most of the opportunity” (ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν and τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι respectively).
- 27 Oakes, *Galatians*, 136–37. See also Martyn, *Galatians*, 370–71; Wilson, “Wilderness Apostasy,” 557.
- 28 See in particular Keener, *Galatians*, 141. Also Das, *Galatians*, 411–12; Dunn, *Galatians*, 216; Matera, *Galatians*, 150; Martyn, *Galatians*, 317; Moo, *Galatians*, 210; Oakes, *Galatians*, 137; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 238; Williams, *Galatians*, 105.
- 29 Matera, *Galatians*, 144; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 164; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 289. These scholars argue that “we” in Galatians always refers to Jews or Jewish Christians, Paul included, thus “we.” Moo correctly notes, however, that “Paul’s pronouns defy any such simple classification.” Moo, *Galatians*, 211.

part addressing Jews and the second part both Jews and Gentiles,³⁰ and yet others understand that the whole verse addresses both Jews and Gentiles.³¹ So an important question is, who does Paul address in this verse when he writes “we”?

There are three places in his letter where Paul uses the plural “we” and is clearly not including his Galatian (likely predominantly Gentile) hearers. The first is in 1:8–9, where “we” could refer to Paul and those he includes as senders of the letter or those who preached the gospel with him to the Galatians,³² or “we” could be a literary plural referring to Paul only.³³ Either way, this “we” does not include the Galatians. The second is in 2:5 and 2:10, where “we” refers to Paul and Barnabas. The third is in 2:15–17, where “we” refers to Jewish Christians.³⁴

None of the other occurrences of the plural “we” so clearly exclude the Galatians or Gentiles. While context must inform the referent, Paul’s theology and rhetoric must also be brought to bear on this question.³⁵ Throughout his letter, Paul proclaims that believing Gentiles are a part of God’s family (3:7, 26, 28–29; 4:6–7, 28; 5:6). His message is that in Christ Jesus “you are all one” (3:28). For Paul to make regular and concerted distinctions in the main body of his argument (3:6–4:7) between “we” Jews and “you” Galatians would run counter to his message. Christ came to purchase the freedom of both Jew and Gentile

30 Betz, *Galatians*, 208; T. L. Donaldson, “The ‘Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3. 13–14,” *NTS* 32, no. 1 (2009): 98; Dunn, *Galatians*, 216–17; Vanhoye, *Galatians*, 126; Wright, *Galatians*, 153.

31 Brad R. Braxton, *No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 98; Bruce, *Galatians*, 196–97; Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1928), 219; Das, *Galatians*, 408–409; Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, *NICNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 181; Erin M. Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans: Contemporary Metaphor Theories and the Pauline Huiiothesia Metaphors*, *BibInt* 153 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 158–61; Keener, *Galatians*, 184; J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes and Dissertations*, 10th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1890), 166–67; Martyn, *Galatians*, 334–36; Moo, *Galatians*, 267; Franz Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 4th ed., *HThKNT* 9 (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), 270–71; D. Francois Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centred Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter*, *WUNT* 190 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 150.

32 Betz, *Galatians*, 52; BDF §280; Das, *Galatians*, 106; Fung, *Galatians*, 46; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 77.

33 Martyn, *Galatians*, 113; Moo, *Galatians*, 80; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 396.

34 There is debate on where Paul ends his account of the Antioch event (whether it concludes at 2:14 or continues to 2:21), but there is agreement that “we” in these verses refers to Jewish Christians, if not specifically Paul and Peter. See for example Betz, *Galatians*, 115; Bruce, *Galatians*, 136–41; Matera, *Galatians*, 92–95.

35 Martyn, *Galatians*, 334–36; Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 150.

(3:13, 4:5), and both Jewish and Gentile believers receive the Spirit (3:14) and adoption as sons and daughters (4:5).³⁶ Lars Hartman further notes that the “shift to ‘we’ language has the rhetorical effect of engaging the listeners, and of bringing speaker and hearer on the same footing.”³⁷ Thus the rhetorical effect reinforces Paul’s theological message. Therefore, the evidence supports the majority view that in this verse (4:5) the “we” is inclusive, referring to both Jews and Gentiles.³⁸

The Galatians heard then two reasons God sent his son: (1) to purchase the freedom of those under the law (4:5a), (2) that they might receive adoption as sons and daughters (4:5b). The law here refers to the Jewish law, so some interpreters limit this phrase to the Jews, as discussed above. Paul stated previously, however, that “the Scripture imprisoned everything and everyone under sin” (3:22),³⁹ so there is a sense in which all people are under the law because they have all failed “to meet the demands of God, expressed in its clearest form in the law of Moses.”⁴⁰ Since the (predominantly Gentile) Galatians were imprisoned by the law, they too needed to be freed.

The Galatians then hear that the purpose (and result) of being freed is that they might receive adoption as sons and daughters.⁴¹ Paul uses a legal term for adoption (νόθευσία), so some scholars argue that he is bringing to the mind of his Galatian listeners the Greco-Roman practice of adoption.⁴² Others assert

36 Martyn, *Galatians*, 335.

37 Lars Hartman, “Galatians 3:15–4:11 as Part of a Theological Argument on a Practical Issue,” in *The Truth of the Gospel (Galatians 1:1–4:11)*, ed. Jan Lambrecht (Rome: Benedictina, 1993), 142. As referenced in Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 141. Caroline Johnson Hodge agrees with this rhetorical effect, but she argues that in his letters Paul is only addressing a Gentile audience. She asserts that “Paul commonly uses the first-person plural ‘we’ to indicate that he identifies with his gentile audience.” Caroline E. Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 71. John Gager also argues that Paul is writing to only Gentiles in his letters. John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 78, 80.

38 See also deSilva’s “Excursus: Pronouns, People Groups, and the Plan of God in Galatians 3–4” where he makes a similar, but more nuanced, argument. David A. deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 433–37.

39 I follow the NET translation here, as τὰ πάντα in this context refers to both people and things. Barrett notes that “the neuter expresses comprehensiveness and universality.” C. K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 34. See also Moo, *Galatians*, 239.

40 Moo, *Galatians*, 213. See also Fung, *Galatians*, 148–49; Keener, *Galatians*, 137.

41 For the second ἵνα clause being a purpose/result clause, see for example Fung, *Galatians*, 182; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 172; Martyn, *Galatians*, 390.

42 Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans*, 174; Francis Lyall, “Roman Law in the Writings of Paul: Adoption,” *JBL* 88, no. 4 (1969). Heim qualifies her position by saying that “it is impossible to rule out any model entirely, and so the analysis below will proceed under

that Paul is referring to the Jewish concept of Israel as the sons of God (i.e., Exod 4:22, Deut 14:1, Hos 11:10).⁴³ Paul, in his letter as a whole, appears to be relying on both concepts.⁴⁴ Paul has already explained to his listeners that it is “those who are of faith who are the sons of Abraham” (3:7), emphasizing the theological idea of sonship that believers—including the Gentiles (3:8)—now have. Here in 4:5, however, he brings in the additional idea of Greco-Roman adoption. While Paul and his listeners may not have been intimately familiar with the details of the legal procedures, there was probably some level of common knowledge about such adoption practices.⁴⁵ These practices usually involved adopting an adult into a family (rather than a child), providing them filial rights, and establishing them as heirs.⁴⁶ So by introducing Greco-Roman adoption, Paul is able to “tie inheritance to adoption by making the heir an adopted son.”⁴⁷ Thus, Paul is able to conclude his argument begun in 3:6 with, “So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then also an heir through God” (4:7).⁴⁸

The Galatians heard a final reason that Christ provided them freedom in Paul’s declaration, “For freedom, Christ set us free” (5:1). Paul begins this clause abruptly with no conjunction (asyndeton). He changes the usual Greek word order (hyperbaton), thus emphasizing the idea of freedom by moving the noun (ἐλευθερία) to the beginning of the clause and repeating the idea in the verb

the assumption that the Greco-Roman model is the one that is most likely to have been mentally simulated by the Galatian audience members, with the possibility that some audience members might also have associated Jewish sonship with the vehicle υἱοθεσία.”

- 43 Brendan Byrne, *Sons of God, Seed of Abraham: A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of all Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background*, AnBib 83 (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1979); John Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Traditio-Historical and Exegetical Examination*, WUNT 162 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 182–90; James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus*, WUNT 48 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).
- 44 Bruce, *Galatians*, 197–98; Fung, *Galatians*, 183; Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans*, 168n87; Moo, *Galatians*, 267–68. For an explanation of the differences between Greek and Roman adoption see Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans*, 135–45; Hugh Lindsay, *Adoption in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 35–61.
- 45 Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans*, 122; James C. Walters, “Paul, Adoption, and Inheritance,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J. Paul Sampley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 43–44.
- 46 Jane F. Gardner, *Family and Familia in Roman Law and Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 115; Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans*, 135–45; Lindsay, *Adoption*, 65; Walters, “Paul, Adoption, and Inheritance,” 43.
- 47 Walters, “Paul, Adoption, and Inheritance,” 55.
- 48 Paul has already made clear in 3:28–29 that being a “son” and an heir applies equally to both men and women. See also *ibid.*, 72n76.

(ἐλευθερώω) at the end.⁴⁹ The asyndeton and the peculiar dative τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ likely gave rise to the textual variants associated with this clause.⁵⁰ Some scholars understand τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ to be a dative of means or instrument (“by/with freedom”),⁵¹ but most understand it to be a dative of destination, goal, or purpose (“for freedom”).⁵² Many of the latter note the parallel of 5:13 (ἐπ’ ἐλευθερίᾳ) and argue that this use should help determine the use in 5:1. It is notable that ἐπ’ ἐλευθερίᾳ is found in many Greek manumission inscriptions.⁵³ The literary and social context both lend support for the idea that the Galatians heard Paul saying, quite emphatically, that it was for the *purpose* of freedom that Christ set them free.⁵⁴ We will leave the discussion until the end of this

49 Most commentators note the unusual clause construction, but see especially Tolmie, who explains that the “normal sentence construction would be Χριστός ἡλευθέρωσεν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ, but Paul changes it to τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστός ἡλευθέρωσεν.” Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 175–76.

Nina Livesey in a 2019 article notes that the Vulgate and two early English Bible translations appended 5:1a to the end of 4:31. N. E. Livesey, “Is Freedom an Existential Category in Ancient Discourse?,” *Bib Interp* 27, no. 2 (2019): 279 and 119. Several arguments can be made against appending 5:1a to 4:31. First, children born of a free woman (4:31) have no need of being set free (5:1)—they are born free. This concept requires a cultural understanding of slavery and manumission; knowing it helps the reader recognize that 5:1 is not part of the allegory. Also, Paul mentions Christ for the first time since before he began his allegory. With the mention of Christ here, the Galatian audience would have, again, understood Paul to be changing his focus. Finally, as BDF notes, Paul often uses the asyndeton in his letters to indicate “the transition from one subject to another” (BDF §463). In this case, the Vulgate and the two early English translations are a (very small) minority for good reasons.

50 Betz, *Galatians*, 255; Martyn, *Galatians*, 446–47.

51 Bruce, *Galatians*, 226; Burton, *Galatians*, 271; Fung, *Galatians*, 216. See also the KJV and NKJV translations.

52 Betz, *Galatians*, 255; Wayne Coppins, *The Interpretation of Freedom in the Letters of Paul: With Special Reference to the ‘German’ Tradition*, WUNT 261 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 112; Das, *Galatians*, 518; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 224; Matera, *Galatians*, 180; Moo, *Galatians*, 320; Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 342–43; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 307; Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 175n58. See also most translations: ESV, NASB, NET, NIV, NRSV, RSV.

53 For example, in Lokris (IG IX, 1² 3.633, 3.640, 3.683), Aetolia (IG IX, 1² 1.105, 1.137, 3.683), Delphi (FD III 1.212; SGDI II 2221, 2151), and Calymna (TC 178), among others. This was long noted by Deissmann but often too readily dismissed by commentators. Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1923; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 324. See, however, Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, 55, 166n49; Das, *Galatians*, 518; DeSilva, *Letter to the Galatians*, 586; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 340.

54 Livesey explores how the early English translations understood τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ. She claims that “the change to the dative of purpose (“for freedom”) occurred in the 1901 American

chapter of what this freedom entailed and whether Paul meant, and his listeners understood, this freedom to be spiritual freedom or if it included some level of individual freedom.

In summary, the Galatians heard five reasons that Christ set them free. Christ gave himself (1) to set them free from the age in which they lived which was under the dominion of evil, (2) because he loved them, (3) to free them from the law, (4) that they might be adopted as sons and daughters into God's family, and (5) for freedom itself.

The reasons Greek or Roman slaves were set free were significantly different from the reasons Christ set believers free.⁵⁵ A slave could be set free for the benefit of the state: to increase military might during war or as a reward for testimony in court. Sometimes slaves could achieve their own freedom as a reward for years of hard work and good conduct. Some owners freed slaves in order to marry them or because they had a sexual interest in a slave. Slaves could be freed because they were the owner's child or mother of their child. In a few rare cases, the owner freed a slave in order to adopt them so they could continue the family line. Some slaves were set free due to their high intelligence, wit, or learning. There were times owners set slaves free for dishonorable purposes, such as to defraud creditors or to cover their crimes. It is likely, however, that the primary reason slaves were set free was because they paid a high financial price for their freedom.

Surely the freedpersons, or slaves longing to be set free, were quite struck when they heard the reasons that Christ set them free. He did not set them free to benefit himself; in fact, he gave himself for them. He had no ulterior motives, no plan of exploitation.⁵⁶ He set them free because he loved them, and his love was free of the lust that permeated the relationships many freeborn persons had with slaves and even with some freedpersons. He set them free so that

Standard Version Bible." She even suggests that the change was due to anti-Semitism. Livesey, "Is Freedom an Existential Category?" 280, 281. My focus here is not on how English translations have rendered τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ over time, but how the first hearers of Paul's letter would have understood what Paul meant by this phrase. It is necessary to understand what Paul wrote in his own context before attempting to understand it in our contemporary context.

55 In chapter 2, see the "Reasons for Manumission" sections under both "Greek Manumission" and "Roman Manumission."

56 It is important to point out that the analogy between freedpersons and their former owners and Christ and believers is not exact. As Heim notes, "not every aspect of a model is evoked by a metaphor." Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans*, 147. Christ is not the believers' former slave-owner now setting them free. However, he was the one who set them free. Christ's role was thus analogous to the gods' role in the Greek fictive sales and fictive consecrations, except that Christ actually paid the price for believers' freedom.

each one could become an adopted child of God's family. He set them free for the purpose of experiencing freedom. Every reason Christ set them free was to benefit believers, not to benefit himself. This freedom was not for those closest to the master, those who caught his attention, those who could earn it, those with special skills, or those able to pay a release price. This freedom was for each one who believed because each one was loved.

2 The Means by Which Christ Set Believers Free

Paul not only reminds the Galatian churches of the reasons Christ set them free, but he emphasizes the means by which Christ set them free. From the very start of his letter, Paul reminds them that Christ set them free by giving himself (1:4). The Galatians knew that the one who gave himself, τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν, was a reference to Christ's death on the cross.⁵⁷ Christ gave his own life—there was no higher price he could have paid. Paul explains that Christ gave himself for our sins, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. The preposition ὑπὲρ here includes the idea of aim or purpose, which in this context is atonement or expiation.⁵⁸ Therefore, expressed more fully, Christ gave himself for the atonement of our sins. In this brief phrase, Paul succinctly says that people are liable for their sins before God, but Christ's death on the cross provided the payment.⁵⁹ Later, Paul echoes Gal 1:4 by speaking again of Christ's self-sacrifice, παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (2:20). This time, however, he makes it quite personal: Christ “loved me and gave himself for me.”⁶⁰

Paul goes on to explain that through his death on the cross, Christ freed believers from the curse of the law “by becoming a curse for us (γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα)” (3:13).⁶¹ Just prior, Paul declared that “all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse” (3:10). Some scholars understand this curse to

57 Paul speaks of Christ's crucifixion and his death in 2:20–21; 3:1, 13; 5:11; 6:12, 14.

58 Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 210. See also Betz, *Galatians*, 41; Bruce, *Galatians*, 75; Fung, *Galatians*, 40; Martyn, *Galatians*, 89. Contra Smith and Kim who argue that this phrase can indicate a “a moral reason for which Jesus died In this regard, Jesus's death is a moral sacrifice that challenges people to live through his faith.” Mitzi J. Smith and Yung Suk Kim, *Toward Decentering the New Testament: A Reinroduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018), 129.

59 Martyn, *Galatians*, 90. See also Betz, *Galatians*, 41; Fung, *Galatians*, 42.

60 As Dunn states it, “the whole phrase is radically personalized.” Dunn, *Galatians*, 147.

61 The participle γενόμενος is functioning instrumentally, indicating the means by which Christ set believers free. See also Burton, *Galatians*, 172; Das, *Galatians*, 327; Moo, *Galatians*, 213.

apply only to the Jews since the law in view is the Mosaic law.⁶² Both Jew and Gentile, however, benefit from Christ's having become a curse on the cross,⁶³ so it can be said that "both the observant and the non-observant live under the Law's curse."⁶⁴ By quoting Deut 21:23, Paul shows that Jesus's death on a cross brought him under a curse. F. F. Bruce explains that "the curse which Christ 'became' was his people's curse, as the death which he died was their death."⁶⁵ Here in this context then, in the phrase "becoming a curse for us (γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρρα)," we see the substitutionary sense of ὑπὲρ which not only means that Christ died "on our behalf" but also "in our place."⁶⁶

Christ was able to give himself on the cross because he first took on human form, being "born of a woman, born under the law" (4:4). These two phrases stress Jesus's humanity.⁶⁷ Jesus, in his incarnation, took on the constraint of being under the law so that he could bear the curse of the law through death on the cross and set those who have faith in him free.⁶⁸

As the Galatians listened to Paul's letter, they heard three means by which Christ set them free: (1) by giving his own life, (2) by becoming a curse, and (3) by becoming one of them—a human being. They were imprisoned by sin and were under the curse of the law, and the only way to provide them freedom was for Christ to become one of them, become a curse for them, and give his life for them. Christ paid the cost—his very life—to set the Galatians free. They did not have to perform any works or obey any law (2:16; 3:2, 5, 11). All they had to do to acquire this freedom, which included receiving the Spirit and becoming "sons of Abraham," was to place their faith in Christ (3:2, 5, 7, 14).

62 Betz, *Galatians*, 148; Donaldson, "The 'Curse of the Law,'" 97; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 121; Matera, *Galatians*, 124; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 236–37.

63 Das, *Galatians*, 331; Dunn, *Galatians*, 177; Fung, *Galatians*, 149; Moo, *Galatians*, 213; Vanhoye, *Galatians*, 100; Williams, *Galatians*, 105, 107.

64 Martyn, *Galatians*, 335. See also Brad R. Braxton, "Galatians," in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian K. Blount (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 339; Bruce, *Galatians*, 166–67; Dunn, *Galatians*, 176–77; Fung, *Galatians*, 149; Moo, *Galatians*, 203–204, 213; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 215.

65 Bruce, *Galatians*, 166.

66 Rupert E. Davies, "Christ in Our Place—The Contribution of the Prepositions," *TynBul* 21 (1970): 90; Fung, *Galatians*, 149; Harris, *Prepositions and Theology*, 214; Moo, *Galatians*, 213; Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 387. Contra Burton, *Galatians*, 172.

67 Gordon D. Fee, *Galatians: Pentecostal Commentary*, PCS (Blandford Forum, England: Deo, 2007), 149; Fung, *Galatians*, 182; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 171; Matera, *Galatians*, 150; Moo, *Galatians*, 265; Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 269–70.

68 As Bruce puts it, Jesus "entered into the prison-house where his people were held in bondage so as to set them free." Bruce, *Galatians*, 196. See also Keener, *Galatians*, 184.

Reviewing what we discovered in chapter 2, there was a wide variety of means by which Greek and Roman owners could manumit their slaves.⁶⁹ Those who followed Greek manumission practices could free a slave through a will, a public proclamation, a fictive sale, a fictive consecration, or by a simple declaration among witnesses. Those who followed Roman manumission practices could free a slave formally or informally. Only a Roman citizen could free a slave formally. The three means of formal manumission were *censu*, *vindicta*, and *testamento*, but by the first century CE, manumission by *censu* was no longer practiced. There were three means of informal manumission: *per epistulam*, *per mensam*, and *inter amicos*. However, *per epistulam* and *per mensam* were probably not practiced until after the first century CE.

As the slaves and freedpersons listened to Paul's letter, they would have noticed the significant differences between being set free by Greek and Roman manumission and being set free by Christ. Slaves could receive their freedom through a variety of means under Greek and Roman manumission. However, it was only the fortunate ones—those who lived in close contact with their master, who caught someone's eye, who had special skills, who were able to pay their release price—who experienced this freedom. In contrast, there was only one means by which people could receive freedom from sin and the curse of the law, and that was through the work of Christ: his becoming one of them, becoming a curse for them, and giving his life for them. This freedom, however, was open to everyone who was willing to place their faith in Christ.

3 The Cost of Freedom for Believers

The means by which Christ set believers free was unusual; however, the cost of this freedom for believers was even more unexpected. While Christ was the only means by which the Galatians could receive freedom, this freedom was offered to all who believed. This offer of freedom knew of no discrimination: any Jew, any Gentile, any woman, any man, any slave, any free, any freedperson could accept this offer of freedom. And all could accept this offer because the high cost of this freedom was paid by Christ himself, by his very life (1:4, 2:20). There was nothing that stood between the Galatians and freedom except their willingness to place their faith in Christ. Their freedom was completely at Christ's expense. The cost was paid in full.

69 In chapter 2, see the "Means of Manumission" sections under both "Greek Manumission" and "Roman Manumission."

As we discovered in chapter 2, the cost for both Greek and Roman manumission was very high.⁷⁰ Under Greek manumission, the state's offer of freedom usually required the slave to risk his or her life, whether by engaging in battle or offering testimony in court. Most slaves freed by their owners under Greek manumission were required to pay a release price—usually a very high amount. The average price for manumission would buy enough wheat to feed a poor family for three years. To acquire this amount of money, slaves would have had to remain in slavery an extended amount of time or have had some other person(s) interested and able to give or loan them the money. Regardless, few would have been able to pay such an extremely high price for their freedom. To add to this financial burden, slaves often had to pay an additional fee to register and publicize their manumission. Instead of paying a financial cost, female slaves could provide one or more children for their manumitter in exchange for their own freedom. This arrangement involved raising each child for at least a year before leaving the child to a life of slavery—time enough to become emotionally invested in the child. While freedom could be offered to a slave at no cost to the slave, this was a very rare occurrence. In most cases, the slave paid an extremely high price for a circumscribed freedom.

Slaves freed under Roman manumission likely paid a significant price from their *peculium* for their freedom and again for their citizenship. One of the lowest release prices found in our sources was equal to a Roman soldier's earnings for over three years. Again, to build up such an amount in his or her *peculium* would likely have taken a slave years of service to their master. And most slaves probably never had the opportunity to acquire such funds. Those who paid no release price were required to offer *operae*, even to their patron's heirs. Those given their freedom through testamentary manumission first had to wait for the death of their master. Then they often had stipulations to meet before they received their freedom, such as completing a building project or waiting for the death of an heir. Some women received their freedom by providing children (three or four) for their owners. Other female slaves, some of whom were prepubescent or had a slave-partner, received their freedom by agreeing to marry their patron, whom they then could never divorce. Again, freedom could be offered to a slave at no cost, but this appears to be a rare occurrence. Circumscribed freedom under Roman manumission usually came at great cost.

For both Greek and Roman slaves, freedom was never guaranteed. These slaves could work for years building up their savings, bearing the required

70 In chapter 2, see the "Cost of Manumission" sections under both "Greek Manumission" and "Roman Manumission."

number of children for their master, waiting years for their master to die and free them in his or her will—and perhaps die themselves before achieving their deeply desired freedom. The short life expectancy in the ancient Mediterranean, especially of those often ill-treated and ill-fed, would point to many slaves dying before they realized their freedom. In addition, a master never had to agree to free a slave. And even when freedom was promised, the literature provides examples of promises of freedom made and not kept.

Freedom for slaves under both Greek and Roman manumission was not guaranteed, and when it occurred, it came at great cost to the slaves and at great benefit to their manumitters. The freedom provided by Christ was radically different. The freedom Christ offered to each Galatian was offered at Christ's own expense: he took on humanity at his incarnation, he took on the curse of the law and the sins of humanity at his crucifixion. Christ paid the cost of this freedom for each person by giving his very life. The freedom the Galatian believers received came with no exploitation and at no cost to themselves. And this freedom was offered to all who believed—no exceptions, no life-time of waiting, no broken promises. The radical underlying message was that Christ considered each person worthy of his sacrifice—not because they earned it, but because they were human beings whom God loved and who were worth dying for (Gal 2:20).

4 The Extent of Freedom That Believers Receive

Paul not only wants his listeners to understand that Christ provided them freedom, but he wants them to understand the extent of that freedom. As previously explored, Paul establishes that Christ gave himself for the atonement of our sins (1:4): he freed people from the curse of the law (3:13), which fell on all those who failed to abide by it (3:10). Everything and everyone were imprisoned under sin (3:22). Christ's death on the cross not only provided atonement for sins, but it provided people freedom from the power of sin.⁷¹ Because the Galatians had received the Spirit, they could live in such a way that they would not "carry out the desire of the flesh" (5:16). Paul goes on to explain that "those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (5:24). So, while the Galatians still lived in the present evil age, Christ had delivered them from the power of sin over their lives.

71 For sin here understood as a power, see for example Keener, *Galatians*, 156; Martyn, *Galatians*, 360; Moo, *Galatians*, 239–40.

As discussed earlier, however, the freedom that Christ provided from the present evil age is not yet complete. Only a partial rescue has taken place: the new age to come has been inaugurated by Christ's death and resurrection but has not yet fully arrived. To what extent then are believers still under the dominion of evil in the present age? What is the extent of their freedom now? Paul goes on to specifically declare that there is neither slave nor free, but all are one in Christ (3:28). To what extent is the slave set free from the dominion of the free person, especially if the free person is a fellow believer? We must leave these questions unanswered at this point and return to them at the end of this chapter.

Throughout his letter, Paul reminds the Galatians that Christ also freed them from being under the dominion of several other things: the law (3:23–25, 4:5, 5:18), the elemental things of the world (4:3), and beings that are not gods (4:8). “Before faith came” (3:23), the law was necessary as a παιδαγωγός (3:24, 25). A παιδαγωγός was a slave assigned to supervise a young boy, usually from about age six until the boy came of age.⁷² This slave was not a teacher but a guardian and moral guide who was with the child at all times of the day.⁷³ The law, as a παιδαγωγός, served as a guardian and moral guide. But when Christ came, he set the Galatians free from the law,⁷⁴ for its role was no longer needed.⁷⁵

Christ also set the Galatians free from the elemental things of the world, τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (4:3). There is much debate as to what exactly Paul meant

72 Norman H. Young, “*Paidagogos*: The Social Setting of a Pauline Metaphor,” *NovT* 29, no. 2 (1987). See also Richard N. Longenecker, “The Pedagogical Nature of the Law in Galatians 3:19–4:7,” *JETS* 25, no. 1 (1982): 53.

73 Young, “*Paidagogos*,” 158–59, 164. The practice of using a παιδαγωγός spans from the fifth century BCE to the late Roman empire (p. 150).

74 Some scholars and translations identify εἰς Χριστόν as telic, and so understand the law as leading to Christ as its goal or purpose. NASB, KJV, NKJV; Burton, *Galatians*, 200; Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, trans. Theodore Graebner (1535; repr., Urbana, IL: Project Gutenberg, 1998), Gal 3.24, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1549/1549-h/1549-h.htm>; Ramsay, *Galatians*, 384–85. But as Young notes, there are temporal terms surrounding the law throughout Gal 3:19–4:7. Young, “*Paidagogos*,” 174. Therefore, most scholars and translations agree that εἰς Χριστόν here is temporal: the law was our guardian *until* Christ came. CSB, ESV, NET, NIV, NRSV, RSV; Betz, *Galatians*, 178; Bruce, *Galatians*, 183; Das, *Galatians*, 375; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 148–49; Matera, *Galatians*, 136; Oakes, *Galatians*, 127; Sam Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons: A New Rhetoric Analysis on Paul's Slave Metaphors in His Letter to the Galatians*, StBibLit 81 (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 108–109; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 269. See deSilva for an argument supporting both the temporal and the telic understanding of the preposition. DeSilva, *Letter to the Galatians*, 464.

75 David John Lull, “‘The Law Was Our Pedagogue’: A Study in Galatians 3:19–25,” *JBL* 105, no. 3 (1986): 497–98; Longenecker, “Pedagogical Nature of the Law,” 57.

by this phrase, and the discussion usually centers around the four meanings of στοιχεῖον listed by Bauer:⁷⁶ (1) the basic elements (earth, air, fire, water),⁷⁷ (2) heavenly bodies,⁷⁸ (3) fundamental principles,⁷⁹ and (4) elemental spiritual powers.⁸⁰ Context, of course, must determine the usage. Paul speaks of both Jew and Gentile as being enslaved by τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (4:3), of the Gentiles, before they knew God, as being enslaved by beings that by nature are not gods (4:8), and of the Gentiles as turning back to the weak and worthless τὰ στοιχεῖα (4:9). The scholarly consensus is that Paul's argument in 4:1–11 indicates that the Jewish law is included in τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου.⁸¹ When the Galatians heard this phrase, it is likely that several of the various meanings came to their minds. James D. G. Dunn argues that deciding on one primary meaning is an "example of either-or-exegesis," and that Paul used this phrase to refer "to the common understanding of the time that human beings lived their lives under the influence or sway of primal and cosmic forces, however, they were conceptualized."⁸² Thus, Paul argues that Christ set the Galatians free from the dominion of the elemental things of the world (4:3), which included the law and beings that are not gods.

The extent of the Galatians' freedom, however, was dependent upon their protecting it. Christ had set them free, but they had to choose to live in that freedom and not allow it to be taken from them. Paul gives a personal example when he states that he and Barnabas did not yield in subjection for even a moment (2:5) to those who wanted to take away the freedom they had in Christ

76 BDAG, 946.

77 Cf. KJV, NKJV. For the most recent argument supporting this meaning in Paul, see Rusam who notes other scholars whose work he is expanding and confirming. See Dietrich Rusam, "Neue Belege zu den stoicheia tou kosmou (Gal 4,3.9, Kol 2,8.20)," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 83, no. 1–2 (1992): 125.

78 For a defense of this view "with some presumed link to deities," see Oakes, *Galatians*, 135.

79 Cf. ESV, NASB. For a defense of this view and a list of scholars he follows, see Matera, *Galatians*, 149–50.

80 Cf. NIV, NRSV, RSV. These spiritual powers were often "associated with the physical elements." BDAG, 946. For a defense of this view see Betz, *Galatians*, 204–205.

81 See Bruce, *Galatians*, 193; Burton, *Galatians*, 216; DeSilva, *Letter to the Galatians*, 484; Dunn, *Galatians*, 213; Keener, *Galatians*, 182; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 165–66; Matera, *Galatians*, 155; Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 268; Oakes, *Galatians*, 136; Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 147–48; Williams, *Galatians*, 95, 104–105; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 286. Contra Moo, *Galatians*, 263.

82 Dunn, *Galatians*, 212–13. See also Keener who suggests that "we are mixing apples and oranges by contrasting all these approaches, and that some of all of these senses may be reconciled by Paul's usage." Keener, *Galatians*, 181. Note also that the CSB and NET translations render this phrase as "basic/elementary forces of the world," perhaps indicating the same conclusion.

Jesus and enslave them (2:4). Paul's opponents in Jerusalem wanted to require circumcision and thus would have "eliminated grace from the gospel" (cf. 1:6, 2:21, 5:4).⁸³ It is worth noting that this is the first use of the term "freedom" (here the noun ἐλευθερία) in the letter, and Paul both juxtaposes it to slavery and speaks of having to defend or protect it. At the climax of his letter, Paul proclaims to the Galatians that it was for freedom itself that Christ set them free (5:1a).⁸⁴ In view of this, Paul commands the Galatians to stand firm in this freedom, "almost like a military commander rallying wavering troops," and to not be subjected again to a yoke of slavery (5:1b).⁸⁵ This freedom then is valuable yet vulnerable. As Paul had to do previously, the Galatians must now protect and preserve their freedom in Christ.⁸⁶

There is, however, a limitation to this freedom. Paul echoes the declaration of 5:1 when he says that the Galatians were called⁸⁷ to freedom, ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ (5:13a),⁸⁸ but he wants the Galatians to understand the proper use of this freedom. They were not to use their freedom as an "opportunity for the flesh," but they were to "become slaves of one another through love" (5:13b).⁸⁹ By "flesh" (σάρξ), Paul here is not referring simply to the human body but to that "self-regarding element in human nature which has been corrupted."⁹⁰ The Galatians were not to exercise their freedom for their own selfish benefit or to satisfy sinful desires; rather, they had been called to exercise their freedom

83 Betz, *Galatians*, 92. See also Bruce, *Galatians*, 113; Moo, *Galatians*, 130.

84 For the understanding of 5:1 as a climax, see Dunn, *Galatians*, 260; Oakes, *Galatians*, 159.

85 Dunn, *Galatians*, 262. See also Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 343. The "yoke of slavery" is a reference to the Jewish law in particular and to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in general. See Bruce, *Galatians*, 226–27; Das, *Galatians*, 520; Matera, *Galatians*, 180, 187; Moo, *Galatians*, 320–21; Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 344.

86 For this concept of preserving the freedom Christ has provided, see also Betz, *Galatians*, 256–58.

87 The passive, ἐκλήθητε, indicates that God is the one who initiated the Galatians' freedom. They did not have to persuade God to grant them freedom; rather, God intended them to have it. See also Dunn, *Galatians*, 286.

88 The preposition ἐπὶ expresses purpose in this context (BDAG, 366; BDF §235.4). See also Bruce, *Galatians*, 240; Fung, *Galatians*, 244; Matera, *Galatians*, 192.

89 5:13b begins with μόνον, which in this context serves as a marker of limitation (BDAG, 659). See also Betz, *Galatians*, 272; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 239; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 376.

90 Bruce, *Galatians*, 240. Similarly, Keener translates σάρξ here as "self-indulgence" (Keener, *Galatians*, 246). See also Dunn, *Galatians*, 285. Matera may express this idea of a focus on self best when he comments that σάρξ here "refers to the inclination and tendency in the human person to live an existence completely and totally centered on the self." Matera, *Galatians*, 196. So, we see that Paul first calls the Galatians to live for God (2:19–20), and now he calls them to live for others.

for the benefit of other believers.⁹¹ In fact, Paul says that through love, they are to become slaves of one another (δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις).⁹² This must have been a shocking statement to hear.⁹³ Paul has consistently warned them away from slavery, and now he calls them to it. How could slavery ever be anything but exploitative? The answer lies in the means by which they are slaves of one another: through love, διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης.⁹⁴ They are *all* one in Christ (3:28), they are *all* commanded to not exercise their freedom for their own selfish benefit, and they are *all* to become slaves of one another by means of love.⁹⁵ Love does not allow for exploitation: if you genuinely love someone, you will not exploit them.⁹⁶ Further, and significantly, this “mutual relationship” of love “does not leave room for unilateral domination.”⁹⁷

91 Betz comments that “freedom means that the Christian has the option whether henceforth his existence is made up of the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ (5:22–23) or of ‘the works of the flesh’ (5:19–21) Freedom can only mean what it says if the Christian has a choice.” Betz, *Galatians*, 273.

92 This love does not exclude proper love of self, as the next verse (5:14) indicates.

93 Witherington states that “this is the language of reversal which we also find in the Jesus tradition ..., and suggests an attempt to deconstruct some of the major ideas about social status and social condition that existed in the ancient world.” Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 378. See also Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery as Moral Problem: In the Early Church and Today*, Facets Series (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 23, 49; Dunn, *Galatians*, 288.

94 The preposition διὰ expresses means in this context (“through love,” as most translations: CSB, ESV, KJV, NASB, NET, NKJV, NRSV). See also Fung, *Galatians*, 244–45. Contra NIV, NLT which translate it as “serve one another (humbly) in love.” So also Moo who understands διὰ here as expressing motive or manner (Moo, *Galatians*, 345), and Longenecker who understands it as “conditioning cause,” although he still translates it as “through love.” Longenecker, *Galatians*, 241.

95 Gaventa observes that “the injunction to ‘become slaves to one another’ dramatically asserts the limitations of Christian freedom. Yet this slavery is also radically unconventional, for enslavement in Christian community is mutual rather than hierarchical.” Beverly R. Gaventa, “Galatians,” in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1382. See also Philip F. Esler, “Family Imagery and Christian Identity in Gal. 5:13–6:10,” in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor*, ed. Halvor Moxnes (London: Routledge, 1997), 138; Sam K. Williams, *Galatians*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 145.

96 See also Oakes, *Galatians*, 184.

97 Vanhoye continues, “Paul’s wording points to a radical transformation of relationships among people based on a dynamic of love that comes from God—charity understood in all its dimensions.” Vanhoye, *Galatians*, 168. Contra Sheila Briggs who comments that “in the Greco-Roman world it was not uncommon for free persons, even members of the elite, to describe themselves metaphorically as slaves. This is not to deny that Galatians 5:13 did have implications for the relationship of slaves and slave owners but to question whether one should see this verse as such an unequivocal subversion of the hierarchy of slavery.” Sheila Briggs, “Slavery and Gender,” in *On the Cutting Edge: The Study of Women in Biblical*

In summary, as the Galatians listened to this letter from Paul, they learned the extent of the freedom that Christ had provided them. Christ had freed them from (1) the liability for their sins, (2) the power of sin over their lives, (3) the dominion of evil in the present age, at least to some extent, and (4) the dominion of the elemental things of the world, including the law and beings that are not gods. They also learned, however, that they would face challenges to their freedom, and thus they needed to protect and preserve it. Finally, they were exhorted to use their freedom, not for self-indulgence, but for the benefit of other believers through their love for one another.

In chapter 2, we discovered the extent of freedom that slaves freed under Greek and Roman manumission experienced.⁹⁸ Slaves freed under both manumission systems were no longer owned by another person, could marry and have legitimate children, and could own property. Slaves freed formally under Roman manumission became Roman citizens and could create a will, thus passing on at least a portion of their estate to heirs of their choice.

These freedpersons, however, still suffered a number of liabilities and disadvantages. Slaves freed under Greek manumission could not become citizens, thus they could not vote or hold office. They were required to maintain a relationship with their former owner, registering them as their *προστάτης*. If they died childless, their former owner inherited their estate. Socially, they were often viewed as servile due to their past, and their freedom could be challenged. It often behooved them, therefore, to remain near their former owner who could verify their freedom. They were identified as freedpersons, *ἀπελεύθερος*, not simply free persons; they never achieved the same status as someone born free.

Slaves freed under Roman manumission suffered similar liabilities and disadvantages. Slaves freed informally could not become Roman citizens, and when they died their patron inherited their estate. Slaves manumitted formally could become citizens, but they could only partially control their estate upon their death. They were also barred from most political offices. Freedwomen suffered additional disadvantages. They could not refuse to marry their patron and could not divorce him, they were required to name their patron their *tutela legitima*, and their patron always inherited a part of their estate. Freedpersons in general could still be examined under torture. They continued to bear the stain of slavery and were never considered as equals with freeborn persons.

Worlds: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. Jane Schaberg, Alice Bach, and Esther Fuchs (New York: Continuum, 2003), 185.

98 In chapter 2, see the “Extent of Freedom” sections under both “Greek Manumission” and “Roman Manumission.”

The Romans made a point, in fact, of distinguishing those who were freeborn, *ingenuus*, from those who were free, *liber*. Many freedpersons continued to live with their patron and continued performing many of the same services they had rendered as slaves. Owners of freed slaves under both Greek and Roman manumission could continue to exploit their freedpersons if the freed slaves left “spouses” or children behind in slavery and desired to someday arrange for their freedom.

The freedpersons listening to Paul’s letter surely noted that the extent of freedom Christ offered was significantly different. Christ provided complete atonement for sins—the stain of sin was entirely removed. He also provided complete freedom from the dominion of sin and the dominion of the elemental things of the world. Believers’ freedom needed to be protected, but they had only to stand firm in the knowledge that Christ had set them free. They could foolishly forfeit their freedom, but no one could take it away from them (5:2–4).

The freedpersons and slaves also heard, however, that Christ had rescued them from the present evil age and that there was no longer slave or free—that all believers were one in Christ Jesus. They heard the challenge to become slaves to each other by means of their love for each other. Was the extent of freedom Christ provided only spiritual? If all believers were one, and all should use their freedom to benefit each other, should the exploitation of a Christian slave or freedperson by a Christian owner still take place? To this question we will have to return.

5 The Benefits of Freedom for Believers

Throughout his letter, Paul reminds the Galatians of the benefits that Christ had provided them by setting them free. We have already discussed many of the benefits the Galatian believers had received. Christ had provided them atonement for sins and rescued them (to some extent) from the present evil age. He had provided them freedom from the power of sin, from the curse of the law, and from the dominion of the elemental things of the world, which included the law and beings that are not gods.

A significant benefit that Paul repeatedly mentions is that Christ had freed the Galatians so that they could become sons and daughters and heirs of God. Paul begins by first asserting that the Galatian believers, “those of faith,” are sons and daughters of Abraham (3:7). He goes on to explain that the law, which came after the promise to Abraham, did not invalidate the promise (3:17). Paul notes that the inheritance that was graciously given to Abraham was not based

on the law but based on a promise (3:18). Therefore, the Galatians are sons and daughters of Abraham and share in his inheritance (3:29) by means of their faith in Christ—sonship and inheritance are granted apart from the law. Paul then asserts that the Galatians are not only sons and daughters of Abraham, but they are also sons and daughters of God (3:26, 4:5–7)⁹⁹ and heirs through God (4:7).¹⁰⁰ The Galatians had been slaves to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου; now they were no longer slaves, but sons and daughters and heirs (4:7). Paul emphasizes his point by making his statement very personal: you (each individual Galatian believer) are a son or daughter and an heir.¹⁰¹

A related benefit of being a son or daughter and heir of God is being a member of God's family, thus being brothers and sisters of fellow believers. Paul regularly refers to the Galatians and other believers using sibling language, ἀδελφός (Gal 1:2, 11; 3:15; 4:12, 28, 31; 5:11, 13; 6:1, 18). While this term can be used to indicate a male sibling, the context of this letter indicates that Paul is using the term to refer to both men and women.¹⁰² He appears to be “reminding his hearers that they and he belong to the same family.”¹⁰³ Paul also exhorts the Galatians to “do good to all” but “especially to those who are of the household of faith (οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως)” (6:10). Philip Esler argues that Paul uses this language to create a new group identity for the Galatians.¹⁰⁴

Finally, and significantly, the Galatians have received the Spirit (3:2, 5, 14; 4:6). They do not simply know God or are known by God (4:9)—God's Spirit lives within them. The presence of the Spirit in their lives is the “irrefutable evidence that God had accepted these Gentiles.”¹⁰⁵ The Spirit also provides the power they need to deny their own self-centered and sinful desires (5:16, 24).¹⁰⁶

99 The Jews understood “sons of God” as the “unique privilege of Israel as the people chosen and created by Yahweh for himself.” Byrne, *Sons of God, Seed of Abraham*, 16. Witherington notes that “the point Paul is making is that the Gentiles now enjoy a title that formerly had belonged exclusively to Jews.” Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 270.

100 In 4:7, the preposition διὰ here indicates ultimate agent: God is the one who has made them an heir. See Moo, *Galatians*, 271.

101 The verb (εἶ) is singular. The context also makes it clear that Paul is speaking to each believer in the Galatian church: each woman and man, each slave and free person, each Jew and Gentile. It is not only the free Jewish men who are “sons” and heirs. See also Keener, *Galatians*, 163; Matera, *Galatians*, 141; Moo, *Galatians*, 250; Oakes, *Galatians*, 129.

102 Thus “brothers and sisters” (NET, NIV, NRSV) and the older “brethren” (KJV, NASB, NKJV, RSV). See also Dunn, *Galatians*, 30; Esler, “Family Imagery,” 138; Martyn, *Galatians*, 142; Moo, *Galatians*, 69n7. Contra Jeremy Punt, “Pauline Brotherhood, Gender and Slaves: Fragile Fraternity in Galatians,” *Neot* 47, no. 1 (2013): 160–62.

103 Williams, *Galatians*, 43.

104 Esler, “Family Imagery,” 131.

105 Dunn, *Galatians*, 153. See also Das, *Galatians*, 289; Keener, *Galatians*, 121–22; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 123; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 211.

106 Keener, *Galatians*, 252; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 393–94, 412.

As the Galatians listened to this letter, they were reminded of the benefits Christ provided them when he set them free: atonement for their sins, rescue from the present evil age, and freedom from the elemental things of the world, from the law, and from the power of sin. In addition, Paul wanted the Galatians to know that (1) they became sons and daughters and heirs of God, (2) they became members of God's family and, therefore, siblings to each other, and (3) they had received the Spirit, who served as proof of their family membership and provided them power over sinful desires.

In chapter 2, we discussed the benefits that slaves set free under Greek and Roman manumission received.¹⁰⁷ These slaves were freed from being owned by another person and from sexual exploitation and most bodily punishment. Freedpersons could have a legal marriage and legitimate children. They could own property and control their estate to some extent. Some freedpersons set free under Roman manumission also became Roman citizens. Most significantly, they were no longer a slave without honor—someone only to be exploited. While freedpersons would always bear the stain of slavery, they were now people who could acquire honor and dignity. They were finally viewed as fully human.

As the Galatian freedpersons listened to Paul's letter, the benefits provided by Christ setting them free must have been especially significant. Free and slave alike would value the atonement for their sins, rescue from the present evil age, and freedom from the elemental things of the world, from the law, and from the power of sin. Freedpersons, however, would surely find particular value in becoming sons and daughters and heirs of God, becoming fellow siblings of other believers, and receiving the Spirit. In society they were set apart as freedpersons from freeborn persons, but they were not set apart in God's family: all believers were sons and daughters, all were heirs, all were full siblings. While a freedperson manumitted under Roman manumission sometimes became the patron's heir, it was much more common for the patron to inherit the freedperson's estate. The freedpersons listening to Paul's letter heard, however, that every one of them had become sons and daughters and heirs.¹⁰⁸ But perhaps the most significant benefit of all was the gift of the Spirit—God's Spirit that marked them as his own. As freedpersons, they could never truly leave the degradation of their former slavery behind. While manumission now provided them the opportunity to acquire honor, they still retained the stigma of having

107 In chapter 2, see the "Benefits of Manumission" sections under both "Greek Manumission" and "Roman Manumission."

108 This would have been especially significant for freedwomen, as women were rarely adopted and rarely (if ever) become an heir. See Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 202; Lindsay, *Adoption*, 73–74.

lived in slavery. As a believer, however, the Spirit marked them as members of God's family, fully accepted by God. Their human dignity was affirmed, and the stain of their past slavery was completely removed.

6 How a Freedperson Would Have Likely Heard the Proclamation of Freedom in Galatians 5:1

As each Galatian church gathered to hear Paul's letter read, there were freedpersons among them—persons who had lived in slavery and who had likely paid a high price to be set free from it. They were the fortunate ones who were close enough to their owner to gain his or her favor. Some of them had worked for years accruing money for their release price, some had provided children as slaves, some worked and waited until an owner or heir died, and some “agreed” to marry their owners. Their goal was not the Stoic ideal of inner freedom—they longed and worked and sacrificed to achieve freedom of a different kind.

What was freedom to these former slaves? It was individual freedom with three components: personal, legal, and social freedom¹⁰⁹—not all of which were equally, if ever, achieved. Personal freedom was freedom from being owned by another person, freedom from being considered sub-human and incapable of having respect or honor, freedom from unquestioned and unavoidable physical and sexual abuse. This freedom they achieved, for the most part.¹¹⁰ Legal freedom was freedom to have a legitimate spouse and children, freedom to own property, freedom to represent themselves legally and control their estates, freedom to become a citizen and participate in society politically. This freedom they achieved only partially. Most freedpersons (the exception being men who were freed formally) could not represent themselves legally and could only partially control their estate. Many were never citizens, and those who were had most political offices denied to them. Social freedom was freedom from the stain of slavery, freedom from the “sub-status” of being a freedperson, freedom from obligations to their former owner. This freedom they never achieved: their past slavery was never forgotten, they were never considered as equals to freeborn persons, and society (particularly Roman

109 Cf. Tsang who notes that “freedom was not only experiential, but was also legal, public, societal and official.” Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons*, 51.

110 According to Seneca, freedpersons could still be used sexually by their former owners. “Losing one's virtue is a crime in the free-born, a necessity in a slave, a duty for the freed-man.” Sen., *Controv.* 4, praef. 10. As referenced in M. I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (New York: Viking, 1980), 164.

more so than Greek) expected them to remain obligated in some manner to their former owners for the "gift" of manumission they bestowed on them. Despite all their work and sacrifice, these freedpersons would always be ex-slaves with circumscribed freedom.

What did these freedpersons hear then when Paul talked about the freedom Christ provided? They clearly heard that Christ provided them spiritual freedom. All believers received this freedom—none would be left in spiritual slavery. More remarkably, Christ himself paid the cost for their freedom, and he did it because he loved them—he did not set them free for his own benefit, and he had no ulterior motives. His love was not the self-gratifying "love" to which they had often been exposed; rather, it was a genuine, sacrificial love. This spiritual freedom included freedom from the liability for their sins, from the power of sin, and from the dominion of the elemental things of the world, which included the law. Spiritual freedom also included being adopted sons and daughters in God's family, siblings of one another, members of God's household, and heirs. And the proof that they had been set free and made members of God's family was not a document or inscription that could be lost or destroyed, but the presence of the Spirit himself in their lives.

When the Galatian freedpersons heard Paul speak of Christ rescuing them from the present evil age (1:4), however, did they hear of only spiritual freedom? Or did they hear of more? The arrival of the Spirit marked the inbreaking of the new age into the present age. While the present age still continued, radical changes had occurred. With the advent of Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Spirit, the role of the law was ended. The presence of the Spirit in the lives of the Gentiles marked them as full members of Abraham's family and heirs of God. These changes not only impacted the spiritual world of believers, but they were meant to impact their social world as well. Paul clearly expected the social relationships between Jewish and Gentile believers to change: he expected the Jews to have table fellowship with Gentiles (2:11–14), and he asserted that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision mattered (5:6, 6:15). When Paul said that there was neither Jew nor Greek, but all were one in Christ Jesus (3:28), he had something more in mind than just a spiritual oneness. The spiritual reality was meant to change their social reality.¹¹¹ While Paul addressed the impact of the new age

111 Richard A. Horsley, "Paul and Slavery: A Critical Alternative to Recent Readings," in *Slavery in Text and Interpretation*, ed. Allen Dwight Callahan, Richard A. Horsley, and Abraham Smith, Semeia, vol. 83/84 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1998), 187–88. See also Betz, *Galatians*, 190–92; Keener, *Galatians*, 172; Wayne A. Meeks, "The 'Haustafeln' and American Slavery: A Hermeneutical Challenge," in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters: Essays in Honor of Victor Paul Furnish*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering

on Jewish and Gentile relationships, he did not address how it should impact the other relationships mentioned: slave and free, male and female.¹¹² The slaves and freedpersons must have wondered what the implications were for relationships between slave and free—and freedpersons—in the community of believers. If the social relationships between Jews and Gentiles were meant to be impacted by Christ's work on the cross and the coming of the Spirit, were not the social relationships between slave and free to be impacted also?

When the Galatian freedpersons heard Paul emphatically declare that it was for the purpose of freedom that Christ set them free (5:1), did they hear again of only spiritual freedom?¹¹³ Or did they hear of more? Some of them might have seen the Greek manumission inscriptions, or even paid for their own, which stated that a slave had been sold or dedicated to a god for the purpose of freedom. Even if they were not familiar with the manumission inscriptions, the question must have arisen as to what the freedom Christ provided entailed: Did it include some level of individual freedom? Paul reminds the Galatians that they were called to freedom, but this freedom included becoming slaves to one another through love (5:13). As noted earlier, this would have been a shocking statement to all who heard it, but especially for freedpersons who had worked and sacrificed to remove themselves from a life of slavery.

If God had called them to freedom, how could they then live as slaves? What did Paul mean by this? Once again, it is obvious that Paul expected the freedom that Christ provided to believers to change not only their spiritual lives but their social lives as well. The Spirit not only identified them as sons and daughters and heirs of God, but he also produced “fruit” in their lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (5:22–23). These are not only personal qualities, but qualities that impact community relationships.¹¹⁴ The Spirit enabled the Galatians to love their neighbor

and Jerry L. Sumney (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 244; Schüssler Fiorenza, *A Feminist Theological Reconstruction*, 210; Wright, *Galatians*, 31.

112 See also Richard N. Longenecker, *New Testament Social Ethics for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 54; Martyn, *Galatians*, 377.

113 Livesey argues that Paul is only speaking here of freedom from the Law, or Torah—a type of spiritual freedom then. Livesey, “Is Freedom an Existential Category?” 295, 296. She takes Betz to task for deriving his “list of ills from which freedom saves ... not from the immediate context of Gal. 5:1 but instead from various parts of the letter of Galatians” (p296). I would argue, however, that since the concept of freedom is found throughout the letter of Galatians, that it is not only appropriate, but necessary, to consider the entire context of the letter in order to determine the meaning of freedom in 5:1).

114 Just as the works of the flesh impact community relationships. See Philip F. Esler, *Galatians*, NTR (London: Routledge, 1998), 228; Moo, *Galatians*, 358; Keener, *Galatians*, 257–58; Oakes, *Galatians*, 176; Wilson, “Wilderness Apostasy,” 569; Wright, *Galatians*, 192.

as themselves (5:14), to become slaves to one another through love.¹¹⁵ Could such sacrificial love still allow an owner to exercise complete domination over a slave when the Spirit was present in both master and slave as believers? Could such love continue to count the prior life of slavery against a freedperson when God no longer counted a prior life of sin against believers? Could this love still maintain that a freeborn person was more honorable than a freedperson when both required Christ's sacrifice on the cross to atone for their sins? Could this love allow former owners to require obligation from their freedpersons for the "gift" of freedom when God did not require obligation from believers for the freedom he provided?

Many scholars who study the letter to the Galatians shift the message from the freedom Christ offers to this obligation of the believer. David deSilva comments that Paul has "set up the audience ... to think in terms of costly acts of beneficence and the obligations of beneficiaries."¹¹⁶ Johannes Weiss asserts that "the liberation of the personality finds its limits in the obligation of serving love."¹¹⁷ C. K. Barrett writes that "freedom, true freedom, is always and necessarily accompanied by obligation."¹¹⁸ Richard N. Longenecker comments that "commitment to Christ carries with it ethical obligation."¹¹⁹ John Byron asserts that "Paul has no intention of destroying the law or its validity, but intends to emphasize the obligations of freedom."¹²⁰

Galatian freedpersons would have known the language and reality of obligation. They lived it as slaves and often continued it as freedpersons. They understood as well as anyone how obligation circumscribed freedom. However, obligation is the language of law and hierarchy, whereas love is the language of the Spirit and mutuality. Christ was calling them out of relationships of obligation and into relationships informed by love. Love looks remarkably different than obligation. And in his letter to the Galatians, it is love that Paul calls believers to—not obligation (5:6, 13, 14, 22).¹²¹ Troels Engberg-Pedersen remarks that

115 Wright comments that "the point about the Spirit, and with that the whole point of Christian ethics, is that is means *rehumanization*. It is about becoming more fully human together." Wright, *Galatians*, 192.

116 DeSilva, *Letter to the Galatians*, 587.

117 Johannes Weiss, *Die christliche Freiheit, nach der Verkündigung des apostels Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1902), 18. Translation by Coppins, *Freedom in the Letters of Paul*, 41.

118 Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, 1.

119 Longenecker, *Galatians*, 241.

120 Byron, *Slavery Metaphors*, 197.

121 We are to respond to God's love—but our response is to be one of love, not one of obligation. This idea that the believer's response to God, and in turn to one another, should be one of love rather than one of obligation is found throughout the New Testament:

“the freedom Paul celebrates in Galatians is therefore not just a freedom from the law, but by the same token a freedom *from obligation*.”¹²² Paul will go on to write in a later letter, “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law” (Rom 8:13).¹²³

When the Galatian freedpersons heard Paul’s proclamation, “For freedom, Christ set us free,” what did they hear? They clearly heard that Christ provided them spiritual freedom. But it is very likely that they understood this spiritual freedom was to work its way out into the lives of believers and result in some level of individual freedom for those in the community.¹²⁴ Paul certainly expected this to happen in regard to the relationships between Jewish and Gentile believers. It is not unreasonable that slaves and freedpersons would hear Paul’s assertion in Gal 3:28, that there is neither slave nor free, and expect this spiritual reality to impact their social reality.¹²⁵

Did these freedpersons and slaves, however, envision and desire a slave-free society? Many scholars argue that people in the first-century who lived under Roman hegemony, including Paul, simply accepted the reality of slavery and did not question it.¹²⁶ There were a few voices and groups during that time,

Matt 22:37–39; Mark 12:31–33; Luke 10:27; John 13:34–35; John 14:15; John 15:17; Rom 13:8–10; 1 Cor 13; 1 Cor 16:14; Eph 5:2; Philemon 8–9); 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 4:7–12.

122 Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 174, emphasis his. Käsemann makes the telling observation that modern Christianity is “surrounded by the wrappings of an obligation philosophy.” Ernst Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, trans. Frank Clarke (London: SCM, 1969), 148.

123 I appreciate Craig Keener bringing attention to this verse in particular during a discussion of a paper on this chapter that I presented to a regional SBL meeting.

124 See also Longenecker, *NT Social Ethics*, 51.

125 Harrill asks, “Were slaves in the congregation demanding equal rights as a result of this baptismal statement? There is no evidence of such. Nor is there any indication of any unrest or rebellion among slaves in the Pauline congregations.” J. Albert Harrill, “Paul and Slavery,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J. Paul Sampley, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 334. I am not suggesting that slaves and freedpersons were “demanding equal rights,” but that they likely desired and expected relationships to change. There may be no “evidence” of discontent (that, however, is an argument from silence), but I do not think that proves that the slaves and freedpersons had no such desires—lack of unrest or rebellion does not indicate absence of dissatisfaction. For an exploration of alternate types of resistance outside of slave rebellions see Keith R. Bradley, “Resisting Slavery at Rome,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, ed. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Niall McKeown, “Resistance among Chattel Slaves in the Classical World,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, ed. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

126 Harrill, “Paul and Slavery,” 319; Orlando Patterson, “Paul, Slavery and Freedom: Personal and Socio-Historical Reflections,” in *Slavery in Text and Interpretation*, ed. Allen Dwight

however, who did question and oppose slavery.¹²⁷ As noted in chapter 3, as early as the fourth century BCE, Aristotle acknowledged that there were people who argued that slavery was unjust (*Pol.* 1253b20–23).¹²⁸ Both the Therapeutae and the Essenes lived in communities where there were no slaves.¹²⁹ There were also descriptions of utopian societies, and “the absence of slavery was part of the contemporary imagination of an ideal society, whether this was situated in the past, the present or the future.”¹³⁰ Could freedpersons and slaves in the first century have envisioned a slave-free society? Yes, they could have—even if it was only a utopian one.¹³¹ While the reality of such a society may not have been possible, we need to lay aside the idea that those in the first century could not imagine it. Some isolated groups—the Therapeutae and the Essenes—even lived it. Was this the goal or desire, however, for the freedpersons and slaves who heard Paul’s letter to the Galatians? Bringing an end to slavery in the Roman empire would not have been conceivable. Bringing an end to slavery within the Christian communities, however, may have been thought to be an implication of what Paul was teaching—from a freedperson or slave’s viewpoint.

7 Actual Slave and Freedperson Voices

With over two thousand years separating us from these slaves and freedpersons, and no direct testimony from their mouths, we can only speculate how they would have responded to Paul’s letter. As Ronald Charles asserts, “No one

Callahan, Richard A. Horsley, and Abraham Smith, vol. 83/84, *Semeia* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1998), 266; Hans Wedell, “Idea of Freedom in the Teaching of the Apostle Paul,” *ATHR* 32, no. 3 (1950): 214; William L. Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1955), 150.

127 This view was admittedly a minority view, but it is important to note that it did exist.

128 Boring identifies these people as Sophists. M. Eugene Boring, Klaus Berger, and Carsten Colpe, *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1995), 467.

129 Philo, *Hypoth.* 11.3–4; see also J. M. G. Barclay, “Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership,” *NTS* 37, no. 2 (1991): 177; Betz, *Galatians*, 194; Karin B. Neutel, *A Cosmopolitan Ideal: Paul’s Declaration ‘Neither Jew nor Greek, Neither Slave nor Free, Nor Male and Female’ in the Context of First-Century Thought*, LNTS 513 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 146.

130 Neutel, *A Cosmopolitan Ideal*, 182, also 146. See also Betz, *Galatians*, 194.

131 See also Lincoln E. Galloway, *Freedom in the Gospel: Paul’s Exemplum in 1 Cor 9 in Conversation with the Discourses of Epictetus and Philo*, CBET 38 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2004), 214–15.

can speak for the slaves in antiquity.”¹³² But he goes on to quote Keith Bradley who says, “We will never know exactly, to be sure, what they thought, or felt; but to try to find out is, I believe, something that matters.”¹³³ In a later article, Bradley argues for the use of comparative analysis to aid in this endeavor. Since there is evidence for a “consistency between the patterns of activity by slaves in antiquity and by those in other slave regimes, the way lies open for recreating, even revivifying, something of the ancient experience and psychology of slavery.”¹³⁴ While acknowledging the differences between slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and slavery in the first-century Mediterranean, the similarities are enough (and likely more than most realize) to help us gain further insight and confirm some of our speculations into how slaves and freedpersons might have responded to the idea of freedom in Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

In slave narratives, interviews, and letters recorded from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a common theme is how much the slaves desired their freedom. In a speech, former slave James Curry related the slave’s desire for freedom: “Of course, no slave would dare to say, in the presence of a white man, that he wished for freedom. But among themselves, it is their constant theme. No slaves think they were made to be slaves.”¹³⁵ Former slave Frederick Douglass reflected on the possibility of contentment as a slave:

I have observed this in my experience of slavery,—that whenever my condition was improved, instead of its increasing my contentment, it only increased my desire to be free, and set me to thinking of plans to gain my freedom. I have found that, to make a contented slave ... he must be made to feel that slavery is right; and he can be brought to that only when he ceases to be a man.¹³⁶

¹³² Ronald Charles, *The Silencing of Slaves in Early Jewish and Christian Texts* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 12.

¹³³ Keith Bradley, “The Regular, Daily Traffic in Slaves’: Roman History and Contemporary History,” *CJ* 87, no. 2 (1991): 138.

¹³⁴ Keith Bradley, “Roman Slavery: Retrospect and Prospect,” *Canadian Journal of History* 43, no. 3 (2008): 489. For examples of this approach in biblical studies see Jennifer A. Glancy, “The Mistress-Slave Dialectic: Paradoxes of Slavery in Three Lxx Narratives,” *JStOT* 21, no. 72 (1996); Sandra R. Joshel, “Nurturing the Master’s Child: Slavery and the Roman Child-Nurse,” *Signs* 12, no. 1 (1986).

¹³⁵ James Curry, quoted in John W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 135.

¹³⁶ Frederick Douglass, “The Life of Frederick Douglass,” in *The Classic Slave Narratives*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: Signet Classics, 2012), 384.

To confront the idea that some slaves do not desire freedom, former slave Mary Prince wrote,

I am often much vexed, and I feel great sorrow when I hear some people in this country say, that the slaves do not need better usage, and do not want to be free I say, Not so. How can slaves be happy when they have the halter round their neck and the whip upon their back? And are disgraced and thought no more of than beasts? All slaves want to be free—to be free is very sweet.¹³⁷

Freedperson James Bradley mused, “How strange it is that anybody should believe any human being *could* be a slave, and yet be contented! I do not believe there ever was a slave, who did not long for liberty.”¹³⁸

When these slaves spoke of the Bible and Christianity, they quoted different Scriptures than the slave-owners who claimed the same Christian faith. The slave-owners focused on the household codes and directives to slaves.¹³⁹ Former slave J. W. Lindsay commented in an interview, “Their biggest text is, ‘Servants, obey your masters’; and ‘he that knoweth his mater’s will & doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes’, is a favorite text with them.”¹⁴⁰ The slaves and freedpersons focused on different Scriptures. The words of Jesus were key to their understanding of Christianity. Freedperson Linda Brent quoted two of Jesus’ commandments, “My mistress had taught me the precepts of God’s Word: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ ‘Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.’ But I was her slave, and I suppose she did not recognize me as her neighbor.”¹⁴¹ In a letter from Jackson Whitney to his former owner, he asked for his wife and children to be set free and supported his request with this verse, “Inasmuch as you did it to the least

137 Mary Prince, “The History of Mary Prince,” in *The Classic Slave Narratives*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: Signet Classics, 2012), 262–63. The editor of the Prince’s narrative notes that Prince “repeatedly comments upon the differences between popular white myths or impressions about the feelings of slaves and the actual feelings of the slaves themselves” (p. xxv).

138 As quoted in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 689, emphasis his.

139 Eph 6:5–6, Col 3:22–24, 1 Tim 6:1–2, 1 Pet 2:18.

140 As quoted in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 402.

141 Linda Brent, “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,” in *The Classic Slave Narratives*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: Signet Classics, 2012), 416. Allen Callahan notes that “the Quakers—the only Christians to speak out consistently against slavery in the colonial era—made the Golden Rule the centerpiece of their condemnation of slavery.” Allen Dwight Callahan, *The Talking Book: African Americans and the Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 35.

of them my little ones, you did it unto me.”¹⁴² Henry Bibb wrote his former master and quoted several Scriptures:

Listen to the language of inspiration: “Feed the hungry, and clothe the naked;” “Break every yoke and let the *oppressed go free*,” “All things, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for *this* is the law and the prophets.” While on the other hand your church sanctions the buying and selling of men, women, and children: the robbing men of their wives, and parents of their off-spring.¹⁴³

When slave masters justified owning slaves by the household codes, slaves and freedpersons argued that it was never God’s purpose that one person should own another. Former slave James Curry commented that by reading the Bible, “I learned that it was contrary to the revealed will of God, that one man should hold another as a slave I learned that ‘God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth.’”¹⁴⁴

Significantly, slaveholders asserted that “the only slavery that mattered was spiritual slavery to sin, to which all were bound. Physical slavery was spiritually meaningless under the all-embracing spiritualized hope of salvation.”¹⁴⁵ Slaves, for their part, did not find physical slavery to be “meaningless.” A white preacher speaking to an audience of slaves, recalled “the cause of enthusiasm under his deliverances [about] the ‘law of liberty,’ and ‘freedom from Egyptian bondage.’ What was figurative, they interpreted literally.”¹⁴⁶ Allen Callahan discovered in his research that “the story of the Exodus [was] the most influential of all biblical narratives among American slaves.”¹⁴⁷ The slaves heard the exodus story as a “narrative of God’s historical intervention against slavery.”¹⁴⁸ It is evident that the slave-holders and the slaves started in different places in Scripture when assessing slavery.

When these slaves and freedpersons heard and read the Bible, they understood that its message had social implications. When they heard that God

142 As quoted in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 115.

143 Henry Bibb, quoted in *ibid.*, 50, emphasis his.

144 James Curry, quoted in *ibid.*, 131.

145 Katie G. Cannon, “Slave Ideology and Biblical Interpretation,” *Semeia* 47 (1989): 15–16.

146 A. M. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism in the Carolinas* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1897), 158. As referenced in Callahan, *The Talking Book*, 87.

147 Callahan, *The Talking Book*, 48.

148 Jennifer A. Glancy, “Body Work: Slavery and the Pauline Churches,” in *Critical Readings on Global Slavery*, ed. Pargas Damian Alan and Roşu Felicia (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 442.

brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, they believed that he was a God who would continue to deliver people out of physical slavery. When they heard that Paul proclaimed that God “made from one man, every nation of humanity to inhabit the whole earth” (Acts 17:26a), they understood that all people were equal and, therefore, no one should own another person. When they heard that “in everything, treat others as you want them to treat you, for this fulfills the law and the prophets” (Matt 7:12, NET) and “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31a), they believed that slaveowners should not divide slave families, should not beat and sexually use slaves, and, ultimately, should not own slaves.

These slaves from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cannot speak for the slaves in the first-century Mediterranean world. But because they too lived as slaves, their experience and testimony are significant to this project. They have given us a first-hand account of their desire for freedom, and we hear in their own words how they understood Scripture to offer more than spiritual freedom. They expected the words of Scripture to change how people treated each other—even to the extent that one person would not consider it right to own another person.

8 Paul's Vision of Freedom

The question remains to be asked: What kind of freedom did *Paul* envision when he declared that for freedom, Christ set us free? Did he consider this freedom to be only a spiritual freedom, as so many of his interpreters have argued?¹⁴⁹ Or did he consider that it might be more? He knew it to be more in regards to the relationships between Jewish and Gentile believers. He leaves the question open, however, in regards to slave and free, male and female. Full-scale abolition would not have been possible during the first century,¹⁵⁰ and many commentators note that Paul neither defended nor condemned slavery.¹⁵¹ Some scholars assert that Paul did not perceive the freedom that Christ provided to be “a challenge to the status quo.”¹⁵² Others argue that while Paul

149 See for example Wedell, “Idea of Freedom,” 212. See also Betz’s list of scholars who hold this view: Betz, *Galatians*, 189n68.

150 Neutel, *A Cosmopolitan Ideal*, 163; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 259.

151 Barclay, “The Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership,” 186; Briggs, “Slavery and Gender,” 186; George, *Galatians*, 1994; Harrill, “Paul and Slavery,” 319; Patterson, “Paul, Slavery and Freedom,” 266.

152 Sheila Briggs, “Paul on Bondage and Freedom in Imperial Roman Society,” in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 123. See also

was not advocating the abolition of slavery in the world at large, he did intend for slavery to come to an end within the Christian communities.¹⁵³ Still others assert that Paul did not expect Christian owners to manumit their slaves, but within the Christian community slaves were to enjoy full equality, even attaining to leadership positions.¹⁵⁴ It is debatable, however, just how much equality slaves and freedpersons enjoyed in the early churches.¹⁵⁵ It is difficult to know what the early church practices were.¹⁵⁶ And there is no scholarly consensus on what Paul thought the church practices should have been.

What kind of freedom did Paul envision when he declared that for freedom, Christ set us free? If we are honest with the evidence we have, the answer is not clear. He did not condemn slavery. He did not decisively or clearly advocate for slaves within the Christian assemblies to be set free.¹⁵⁷ When Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians, it is likely he had not considered all the implications of

Harrill, "Paul and Slavery," 334; Anders Martinsen, "Was there New Life for the Social Dead in Early Christian Communities? An Ideological-critical Interpretation of Slavery in the Household Codes," *Journal of Early Christian History* 2, no. 1 (2012): 59, 61, 64.

153 There is evidence from the second century of Christian assemblies using church funds to purchase the freedom of slaves. See Ignatius, *Pol.* 4.3; also Barclay, "The Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership," 176.

154 Bruce, *Galatians*, 188–89; Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 181–82; Gerd Theissen, "Zum Freiheitsverständnis bei Paulus und Philo. Paradoxe und kommunitäre Freiheit," in *Freiheit verantworten: Festschrift für Wolfgang Huber zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Hans-Richard Reuter (Gütersloh: Kaiser, 2002), 366; Wedell, "Idea of Freedom," 213.

155 John Barclay notes that "it is hard to imagine any slaves being given leadership roles, given their inability to predict their attendance from one meeting to the next and the difficulty of admonishing (1 Thess 5.12) their social superiors." Barclay, "The Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership," 179. And given the sexual availability of slaves, Jennifer Glancy challenges the idea that all slaves would have been allowed "full involvement in the Christian body." Glancy, "Body Work: Slavery and the Pauline Churches," 475–76.

156 Neutel, *A Cosmopolitan Ideal*, 241; Thomas Söding, "Die Freiheit des Glaubens: Konkretionen der Soteriologie nach dem Galaterbrief," in *Frühjudentum und Neues Testament im Horizont Biblischer Theologie*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 130. Taylor notes that "we cannot assume ... that slaves enjoyed the same status within Christian communities as free members." N. H. Taylor, "Onesimus: A Case Study of Slave Conversion in Early Christianity," *Religion & Theology* 3, no. 3 (1996): 264. However, Katherine Shaner argues that there is evidence of a range of slave participation, "at times as dishonored and/or dehumanized tools, at times as ambiguous actors, and at other times as fully equal partners." Katherine A. Shaner, *Enslaved Leadership in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 109.

157 1 Cor 7:21 indicates he encouraged slaves to accept manumission when it was offered. And regardless of how one understands the letter to Philemon, Paul never clearly encourages Christian slave owners in general to manumit their slaves.

the message the Spirit inspired him to write.¹⁵⁸ Perhaps he began to wrestle with these implications in his later correspondences. The letter to Philemon is often the focus of attention in this regard. John Barclay suggests there is an “important reason for Paul’s vagueness in this letter and that is that he did not know what to recommend.”¹⁵⁹ Lloyd Lewis comments in his study of the letter, “I see in Paul’s almost dizzying display of family language even Paul struggling with the fact that a gospel that subverts the fundamental distinction between Jews and Gentiles would not long leave the issue of slavery alone.”¹⁶⁰

Nonetheless, the concept of spiritual freedom leading to individual freedom—at least within the Christian communities—was implicit in this early letter of Paul to the Galatian churches.¹⁶¹ Morna Hooker makes the observation that Paul’s “teaching is as much concerned with ‘lifestyle’ as with answers to particular moral questions.”¹⁶² In his letter to the Galatians, Paul urges believers to live as slaves to one another through love. This lifestyle has social implications. I have argued that Galatian freedpersons listened to Paul’s letter and heard a message of not only spiritual freedom but also individual freedom. As freedpersons they had achieved freedom from physical slavery. They continued, however, to have obligations to their former owners, they would always be marked by the stain of the slavery, and they would always be considered as less honorable—they were freedpersons, not freeborn persons. The freedom provided by Christ, however, changed hierarchical obligation to mutual love, erased their past, and established them as sons and daughters and heirs of God. The Spirit in their lives witnessed to these changes. How could Christian brothers and sisters still physically enslave another Christian, keep them in obligation, consider them less honorable, hold their past against them?

158 See also Martyn, *Galatians*, 377; Ramsay, *Galatians*, 387. Neutel notes that “we do not get the impression from his letters that the position of slaves was a major issue for Paul.” Neutel, *A Cosmopolitan Ideal*, 147. See also Glancy, *Slavery as Moral Problem*, 46; Paul King Jewett, *Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 139; Longenecker, *NT Social Ethics*, 54.

159 Barclay, “The Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership,” 175.

160 Lloyd A. Lewis, “An African American Appraisal of the Philemon-Paul-Onesimus Triangle,” in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 246.

161 Keener, *Galatians*, 172; Longenecker, *NT Social Ethics*, 58; Scot McKnight, *Galatians*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 246; Peter Richardson, *Paul’s Ethic of Freedom* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), 168; Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 387.

162 Morna D. Hooker, “Interchange in Christ and Ethics,” *JSNT* 8, no. 25 (1985): 15–16.

As noted, it is likely that Paul had not considered all the implications of his Spirit-inspired message, and the history of the church shows that it has been slow to work out those implications. Some interpreters, noting the church's lack of understanding and slow response, have proposed the idea of the "seed growing silently." James Anderson, writing in 1897, described the idea this way, "On the supposition that Christ intended the ultimate overthrow of slavery, there was no way by which it could have been accomplished but to bury that purpose for the time in a great principle—sow the seed in the soil of human history, and give it time to grow."¹⁶³ The implication of this theory is that the Holy Spirit did not enable the original hearers to fully live out the biblical text(s) where this seed is found—that their social/historical situation somehow prevented it. But can we definitively say that simply because a change did not occur that it *could not* have occurred? Was the church constrained by its social/historical situation or does human sinfulness have any part to play?

Sheila Briggs notes that "slavery creates severe problems for ... biblical interpreters who wish to defend Paul."¹⁶⁴ She goes on to say that she does "not want to let Paul have the last word."¹⁶⁵ This raises the question: Who should have the last word? While Paul may not have considered all the implications of his Spirit-inspired message, I have suggested that it is very likely that the Galatian freedpersons who heard the proclamation—that it was for freedom that Christ set us free—*did* understand its implications, at least for slavery. And the testimonies of slaves and freedpersons from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries give some credence to this suggestion. Our goal, for those of us who view Scripture as God's word to us, is to hear God's voice through his word. The Holy Spirit, the one who guides us into all truth (John 16:13), is in each believer. So it is not Paul—the human who God called and moved to write the letter of Galatians—whom we should be intent on giving or denying the last word in how the text should be understood, but rather the Holy Spirit who inspired the words which were written and continues to help believers interpret them. What might surprise us is those to whom the Holy Spirit is revealing the truth

¹⁶³ James Anderson, "Christ on the Law of Self-Defense and on Slavery," *The Methodist Review* 44, no. 3 (1897): 476. See also J. Albert Harrill, "The Use of the New Testament in the American Slave Controversy: A Case History in the Hermeneutical Tension between Biblical Criticism and Christian Moral Debate," *Religion and American Culture* 10, no. 2 (2000): 154–56; Meeks, "The 'Haustafeln' and American Slavery," 249; William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 83–84.

¹⁶⁴ Briggs, "Slavery and Gender," 174.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 186.

of God's word.¹⁶⁶ The Galatian freedpersons who heard the proclamation that it was for freedom that Christ set us free likely understood the full implications of that proclamation better than most of us ever will. It is time we listen to their voices.

¹⁶⁶ Meeks proposes that when the body of Christ comes together to study and interpret God's word, believers should be in "the habit of listening to the weaker partner in every relationship of power." Meeks, "The 'Haustafeln' and American Slavery," 252. Thomas Hoyt comments that "it is almost axiomatic that in interpreting Scripture those who are marginalized and those who have more of a stake in the status quo would bring a different set of questions to the text." Thomas Hoyt, Jr., "Interpreting Biblical Scholarship for the Black Church Tradition," in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 29.

Conclusion

Our challenge in the twenty-first century is to not limit the implication and application of Scripture by listening to only certain voices from the first century. This project has attempted to listen to voices that have seldom been heard: the voices of the manumitted slaves in the Galatian churches.

In this project, I set out to explore how the manumission of slaves in the first century and the extent of freedom they received could inform our understanding of Gal 5:1 and the freedom Christ provided. My original thesis before I began my research, and stated here for the first time, was that those of us in the twenty-first century have failed to appreciate what ancient freedpersons completely understood: freedom always came with obligation. But as I examined the primary sources for Greek and Roman manumission, as I worked through the various ancient conceptions of freedom, and as I traced a freedperson's experience of freedom through Paul's letter to the Galatian churches, I had to abandon this original thesis—the sources pointed to a very different conclusion.

While freedpersons may have accepted a circumscribed freedom, it became clear that this was not the kind of freedom for which they longed. They simply accepted whatever extent of freedom was offered to them. If the freedom Christ offered was also circumscribed, was this freedom then also incomplete? Was it only a spiritual and eschatological freedom, as so many commentators have argued?

The freedpersons who listened to Paul's letter clearly heard that Christ provided them spiritual freedom. I have proposed, however, that they heard more. They heard that Christ not only brought them spiritual freedom, but through the work of the Spirit, this spiritual freedom was to work itself out in the community and provide the members individual freedom. Just as social relationships between Jewish and Gentile believers were to change, these freedpersons (and slaves) likely understood and expected social relationships between free-born persons, freedpersons, and slaves to change within the community. And even though the slaves and freedpersons from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cannot speak for such persons in the first-century Mediterranean, their personal testimonies provide evidence that slaves and freedpersons did expect Scripture to change these social relationships.

Paul was not explicit as to what the implications were when he proclaimed that for freedom, Christ set believers free. Believers, however, were all now sons

and daughters of God, members of God's household, and heirs together. They were now to live, not in relationships of obligation and hierarchy, but in relationships of love and mutuality: they were to be slaves to one another through love. Christ himself set them all free for the purpose of freedom; this freedom was to be circumscribed only by love. Christ's purpose and the Spirit's enablement provided for this freedom to begin as spiritual freedom and then work itself out into individual freedom for each believer.

This study has attempted to show that simply because Paul was not explicit about the freedom that Christ provided, this does not mean that the Spirit-inspired implications could not have been understood by others who heard and read Paul's letter. And these "others" need not be people of another time and place, whose social situation was different. John Barclay comments that "we must be grateful for those who, in very different circumstances where social change could be both imagined and effected, dared to draw theological and practical conclusions quite beyond the reach of Paul."¹ By exploring how a freedperson might have heard the declaration of the freedom Christ provided, I have suggested that there were those—even during the time of Paul—who did indeed see this freedom as more than spiritual freedom, and that they had valid reasons for doing so. However, for these slaves and freedpersons to realize this freedom within the church, they were dependent upon other believers—who held the power to help them toward freedom—to see the full implication of Scripture as well. History indicates that very few did.

What then can we learn from these freedpersons? First, their presence in the early Christian communities challenges scholars today to pay attention to *all* of the people who would have been involved in these communities and to explore how their unique social location might have allowed the Holy Spirit to reveal to them implications of God's word which others failed to see. This approach is often called reading Scripture "from below," but many scholars who do this work use a hermeneutic of suspicion. The church would benefit from those who approach Scripture from a hermeneutic of trust while approaching past *interpretations* of Scripture from a hermeneutic of suspicion.² Second, these freedpersons challenge believers in positions of power (of any kind) to listen to the voices of believers without power to help them understand the full implication of Scripture—and to be courageous enough to obey the Holy Spirit in whatever he might ask. As believers accept this challenge, it is

1 John M. G. Barclay, "Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership," *NTS* 37, no. 2 (1991): 186.

2 See my explanation and comments in Chapter 1 on these two hermeneutical approaches to Scripture.

important to acknowledge when and where the church has not listened and/or been courageous and to honestly admit the harm that has resulted to believers and non-believers alike. Third, these freedpersons challenge all believers to consider how the arrival of the Holy Spirit has moved us from relationships of obligation and hierarchy to relationships of love and mutuality. They compel us to ask: with the arrival of the Spirit, what other relationships within the community of believers should also be required to change?

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